ROME

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ROME

THE FORUM TRANSITORIUM IN THE 16TH CENTURY.

ROME

BY

F. S. BURNELL

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

LONDON
EDWARD ARNOLD & CO.
1930
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To

MY MOTHER

Made and Printed in Great Britain by
Butler & Tanner Ltd., Frome and London

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ROME

CHAPTER I

THE ROMANCE OF ROME

LEANING on the low wall that encloses the little piazza in front of the church, one looks out over the city. The sound of a bell, far off yet clear, floats upwards from the bewildering sea of roofs and domes and towers, that take a new beauty from the rich golden sunlight of the late afternoon. A green ribbon of trees alone betrays the meandering presence of the Tiber: the ruins of the Palatine stand out, a dusky orange, against their ilex background. Like banners in some vast pageant, monument after monument awakens recognition—the watching presences above the Lateran, the grim bulk of the Colosseum, the bleak façade of the Araceli, the huge gilt statue of Victor Emanuel. Beyond the city's sky-line, the distant hills, where lake-reflected Nemi dreams amid her enchanted woods, and the "long white town" of legend once occupied the present site of Castel Gandolfo, climb upwards to the grove-crowned summit of the Alban Mount. Further to the north the Sabine mountains rise in wilder serration, reminding us of Horace and of the shadowy figure of Numa; and far away the gaunt mass of Soracte, looking like a sleeping dragon, towers in lonely impressiveness above the great plain that has watched the marching and counter-marching of so many armies.

Few cities in the world, probably, can claim so beautiful a setting as Rome: and surely none a panorama so rich in historical association, or so strongly etched with the dreams and deeds and passions of the men and women who dwelt there. Looking down from the Janiculan hill, or standing at sunset on the Pincio, when the mighty cupola of St. Peter's is blazoned, like the crest of God, in ever-deepening purple upon the flaming banners of the heavens, the city outspread beneath seems like a stage where the history of half the world takes shape and re-enacts itself before our eyes. Equally suggestive in its own way, is the prospect of St. Peter's from the Capitol. On the one hand, the seat and symbol of pagan Rome's Empire, and of her creed: on the other, the most superb embodiment in existence of Christianity, towering in triumph upon the site of its agony and humiliation. In actual distance the two are separated by little more than a mile: in spirit, who shall say how widely? The Catholic Church is wellnigh the oldest of all existing human institutions. She has outlived and outfought the empires of Augustus and of Charlemagne. She has seen the transformation of the old world and the discovery and upgrowth of the new. The boldest advances of thought, the most revolutionary discoveries of science, the most far-reaching developments of politics and economics, have failed to shake her power or modify her pretensions. One need not be oneself a Catholic to appreciate the intense interest of such a fact, and its profound possibilities for the history of the future.

The saying that "all roads lead to Rome" doubtless originated in an age when the only roads worthy of the name were, in fact, Roman roads—the great highways, still impressive in their grass-grown neglect, that once carried her legions and her laws to every frontier of her vast empire, from

the Firth of Forth to the borders of Mesopotamia. No longer literally true, the proverb yet holds good in another sense: for there is scarcely a bypath of history that does not conduct us back, sooner or later, to the Eternal City—us, especially, of England, where Roman civilization remained firmly established for nearly four hundred years, where Roman names and Roman words still compose a large proportion of our English speech, and where the very blood of Rome—as who shall doubt it?—still flows in English veins. London itself, like York, Chester, Lincoln and many others, was a Roman city, where the products of the Empire were exposed for sale side by side with those of British make, and the social and political doings of the distant capital were discussed in much the same way as events in England are now read of in Sydney or Calcutta.

During four hundred years the erstwhile invaders had ample time to inter-marry with the original inhabitants and thus become an integral part of the island population, and the substantial nature of the many villas still discoverable throughout the country, with their elaborate mosaic pavements and arrangements for central heating, affords strong *prima-facie* evidence that they did so. The bricks are of British clay, but upon them is the stamp of Rome: and similarly one may be quite sure that the owners of these pleasant homes were, in many instances at least, not purely Roman, but Romano-British—no mere alien stock, that is to say, but the direct, if far distant, ancestors of our own. And it is when we clearly recognize this fact that we put our finger upon one of the principal causes for the profound appeal which Rome herself makes, and has always made, to the affection and the imagination of Englishmen and of the English-speaking peoples. To visit Rome is not so much to go abroad, as when visiting Paris or Vienna or Madrid:

it is, in a sense only less intimately apparent than that in which an Australian of the third or fourth generation still speaks of visiting England, to go "home."

It is no haunt of ancient peace, this city to which our character and civilization alike owe so much. It is more like some venerable and storm-battered mansion, half donjon-keep, half dwelling-place: its massive walls yet scarred by half-forgotten sieges, its crumbling battlements yet frowning defiance to time—their last and most unrelenting assailant—and its every stone yet breathing the memories and traditions of nearly thirty centuries. No city in the world, probably, has suffered more severely or repeatedly than Rome has done throughout her long and chequered history: no city has been more frequently or extensively rebuilt; yet none has preserved more clearly and unbrokenly the record of its development from prehistoric times to the present day. Such relics of the past as yet survive in London or Paris—such, for example, as the Tower, or the *thermæ* at the Cluny—important or interesting as they are, are yet so utterly at variance with their actual surroundings as to require a strong effort of the imagination to realize that there was once a time when they were the natural outcome and expression of the life about them.

In Rome, on the contrary, no such sharp cleavage between past and present obtrudes upon the mind. There, to a degree curiously unaffected by the most blatant evidences of modernity, the one blends almost imperceptibly into the other: one passes from, let us say, the tombs and temples of the Forum to the trams and flat-buildings of the Via Cavour with hardly a realization of the intervening gulf of time. Nor, as might have been expected, is a stronger note of incongruity detected in those quarters, such as the some-

what squalid lanes in the neighbourhood of the Piazza Montanara, which yet preserve much of the character of the medieval city. Poverty and dirt belong, not to an age, but, unhappily, to all time: the back streets of Imperial and of medieval Rome were probably much of a muchness in their essential malodorousness. This is not to say that Rome is not abounding in contrasts: she is, and of the most dramatic description: but they are the contrasts which naturally delight eye and imagination in a genuinely old Persian carpet. Here and there a patch—such as the Victor Emanuel monument—may temporarily stand out by reason of its obvious newness: but the continuity of the pattern remains, none the less, unbroken.

The title of "the Eternal City" is first encountered only in the reign of Hadrian—i.e. at the beginning of the second century A.D.—but very long before, perhaps even so early as the Gaulish invasion of 390 B.C., legend had already enfolded Rome in an atmosphere of mystery and awe, as a city founded in accordance with divine decree, and destined for ever to endure. Such was the belief of the Romans themselves: and by the beginning of the Christian era it was fully shared by the innumerable races within the Empire, and perhaps even by some of the barbarians who prowled beyond its frontiers. Amid the fjords of Scandinavia, or in the gloomy depths of the German forests, strange tales were doubtless whispered of the enchanted city where the gods dwelt in shrines of crystal and gold, and where riches such as no man could measure lay piled in every street: and when Rome fell at last, and the broad sea of Roman civilization everywhere ebbed and dried away into a mere scattered chain of stagnating pools, such tales, which multiplied amazingly in the congenial soil of ignorance and superstition, invested the former mistress of the world

with a dazzling halo of the marvellous and the supernatural.

It must not be forgotten that, notwithstanding the ravages of war, pillage and neglect, the vast city, with its shrunken and degraded population, continued to preserve much of its ancient magnificence of appearance until ruined by the great earthquake of 847: her temples and basilicas, her theatres, baths, porticoes and palaces still stood for the most part practically intact, while hundreds of marble or bronze statues yet adorned her grass-grown fora, or lingered forgotten amid the shadows and silences of her deserted halls. Such a spectacle of desolate splendour must profoundly have impressed the unsophisticated travellers from beyond the Alps.

Moreover, to the grandeur of outward form was added that of spiritual supremacy. In proportion as her temporal dominion dwindled into nothingness, the religious eminence of Rome as the grave of St. Peter and the seat of his successors loomed more and more gigantically out of the gathering gloom. From every corner of western Europe thousands of pilgrims annually converged upon the holy city: kings and paupers, pious women and repentant homicides, knelt side by side before the tombs of the Apostles, and bargained avidly for relics—often of more than dubious authenticity. Edward III paid a hundred shillings to the messenger who had brought him a vest which had belonged to St. Peter, while to the piety of King Athelstan Exeter cathedral owed such truly remarkable curiosities as a scrap of the candle lit by the angel in Christ's tomb and a twig from the bush in which the Lord spoke to Moses! But neither gnat nor camel could strain the gaping gullet of medieval credulity. The scenes of anarchy and violence that daily confronted the pilgrim in the streets, or even in the very churches, the viciousness or corruption that occasionally sullied the

Papal throne, left his faith in Rome's essential sanctity serenely undiminished: while the afterglow of her imperial greatness, the faith in its ultimate revival, lingered for centuries in the waking dreams of men, and even to-day is perhaps not wholly banished from the minds of Italian statesmen.

But who would think of politics in Rome? I, for one, like Sir Andrew Aguecheek, would as lief be a Brownist as a politician when the sun is shining, and the old Spanish Steps are gay with flowers, and the trumpet of the municipal milkman sounds its martial challenge, and babies and their *balie* fill the Villa Borghese with colour and laughter. Romance is waiting!—romance that lurks in every doorway, peers from every palace-window, beckons mysteriously from every dark recess and narrow alley. One may slink with the fallen Nero along the Via Nomentana, or revel with Messalina in her gardens on the Pincian: storm St. Peter's with Barbarossa, or help Cellini to lay the guns of St. Angelo. Not unattended does one tread the streets of Rome: ghosts beyond number stalk by one's side, and mutter strange stories in one's ear, till the jolt and rattle of trams, the raucous hooting of motors, turn to the clash of weapons and the challenge of battle-cries.

Again and yet again, till the imagination almost sickens at the thought, her stones have been splashed and slippery with blood: again and yet again the banners of opposing factions have reeled and swayed to and fro in the narrow streets, while the air rang with the sharp sound of smitten steel and the fierce shouts of struggling men: again and yet again she has undergone the horrors of a sack, has seen her houses flaring to heaven, and her helpless inhabitants a prey to torture and outrage. One thinks of St. Francis playing with the pet lamb of his friend, Jacopa; of Petrarch crowned

with laurel upon the Capitol, or Fra Angelico painting in the Vatican—the sun shines, the bells ring, and in the quiet air there hangs a mist of faintest red, as when one lets fall a drop of red wine into a cup of clear water.

Venice for splendour, Florence for art, Naples for love: but Rome is, above all, the city of war. Not for nothing has she the She-wolf for her totem, with fangs bared in snarling defiance: no meaningless fable is that of the bleeding head unearthed by the builders of the temple of Jupiter. By war she won the dominion of the world: her favourite pastime was the mimic war that dyed darkly scarlet the sands of the amphitheatre: war fills almost every page of her history from the fall of the Empire to the sack of 1527: by war she became the capital of united Italy in 1870, and scarcely by a hair's breadth did she avoid war on the accession of Fascismo in 1922. Who shall say what red destiny may yet await her before, as foretold by Roman legend, the first and greatest of her emperors shall burst at last the enchanted sleep that binds him, and establish her once more in her ancient title of *Roma caput mundi*?

CHAPTER II

THE STORY OF THE PALATINE

THE bushes fringing the brow of the hill are parted abruptly. A man stands there, gazing about him with quick suspicious eyes under one sinewy hand, the companion to which maintains a firm grasp of his stone-headed mace. His hair is matted and inclined to curl: his pupils are black: the wolf-skin draped loosely about his body reveals a frame strong and muscular, and darkened by continual exposure to wind and sun. A savage, undoubtedly, to our notions—yet deserving our respectful attention. For he is the first human being to emerge from the shadows of pre-history, and, standing on the hill known to us as the Palatine, to gaze down upon the future site of Rome . . .

It is now generally agreed that the earliest settlers by the Tiber were a neolithic race which had emigrated into Italy about 2500 B.C. from the then fertile grass-lands of Libya and Mauretania by way of the Iberian peninsula and the Riviera. In clearings amid the dense woods, haunted by the wolf, the bear and the wild boar, they wove their wattled huts, driving their flocks and herds to pasture in the marshy river-valleys, and laying their dead in shallow trenches beyond the confines of their settlements, along with the weapons and utensils which the dead man had owned in life. This primitive folk was not destined to remain in undisputed possession. About 1700 B.C. a new race emigrated westwards and southwards from the region

of the Danube, and trekked slowly down through Italy. The new arrivals were skilled in the working of bronze, and their great bronze swords and shields gave them an overwhelming superiority over the stone weapons of the aborigines, some of whom, however, remained by the Tiber to coalesce on more or less equal terms with the invaders.

The latter, instead of burying, burned their dead, placing the ashes in urns modelled on the huts in which they lived, and which bear an obvious likeness to the thatched huts still inhabited during the summer months by the peasants of the Agro Romano. Along with the ashes they laid in the grave, which was round and well-like, gifts and food for the dead man: a practice whose wide distribution is shown by the fact that as late as the last century the wife of an English labourer thoughtfully deposited in her husband's coffin a tin of sardines, a bottle of beer, and a tin-opener! Yet another wave of invasion seems to have poured over the Alps about seven hundred years later, bringing with it a further contribution to civilization in the knowledge of iron-working. Hitherto known only from meteorites, the awe and dread with which the magical sky-metal was regarded left its traces to the end on the ritual of pagan Rome, and is even yet discoverable in the folk-lore of most European countries.

Though the villages of these early dwellers by the Tiber were scattered over all or most of the hills now included in the modern city, it was the Palatine which was destined to prove, as Professor Lugli calls it, "the cradle of Rome." The appearance of the hill has been so totally altered in later times, principally by the colossal works executed under the Empire, that it is difficult nowadays to realize that it originally consisted of three distinct heights, separated by

glens which have now been filled up—the Palatium, facing the Circus Maximus and the Caelian, and reaching its highest point where now stands the church of St. Bonaventura; the Germalus, looking across the Forum valley towards the Capitol; and the Velia, overlooking the valley of the Colosseum and the ridge on which now rises the Arch of Titus. At some time during the eighth century B.C.—the year 753 has long been traditionally accepted—the villages on these three heights became united in a single township, surrounded by a well-built wall of tufa, remains of which are still conspicuous above the Velabrum. This was the true foundation of Rome.

Both the name of the city and of Romulus, its alleged founder, appear to be of Etruscan origin, and the foundation itself is said to have been performed in accordance with Etruscan ritual. Perhaps even so early the city was at least in contact with that fascinatingly mysterious people who subsequently mastered and transformed it. That Romulus himself was a real personage there seems no valid reason to doubt, though the name itself is probably tribal rather than individual. Up to the end of the Empire the hut in which the founder of the city was believed to have dwelt was piously preserved, and traces of its site are even to-day visible amid the confused group of extremely early buildings beside the so-called Scalae Caci—one of the three gates of the Romulean city.

With the gradual expansion of Rome over the neighbouring hills, the Palatine lost its early character, and became merely a favourite residential quarter. To the numerous shrines already on the hill was added during the long struggle against Hannibal that of the Phrygian Cybele, the Great Mother of the Gods, whose ilex-embowered ruins still overlook the Velabrum. A curious meteoric

stone, brought from Pessinus, in Asia Minor, was set in the silver statue of the goddess instead of a head. The worship of the Great Mother, with its personal and emotional character, and its mystical baptism of blood by which the worshipper was purged of his sins and reborn to eternal life, soon became immensely popular, and was only rivalled in later times by the somewhat similar cults of Isis and Mithras. Numerous traces of the cult were even found not far from the high altar during the building of the new St. Peter's. The great festival of the goddess in April lasted for five whole days, and concluded with a great procession in which the sacred stone, wrapped in ceremonial robes, and accompanied by chanting and music and rites of the wildest indecency, was borne along the Appian Way, and solemnly washed in the little stream of the Almo.

By the end of the Republic the Palatine had become the most fashionable part of Rome. Crassus—the orator, not the Triumvir—was nicknamed the "Palatine Venus" through being the first to decorate his house with columns of costly Sicilian marble. The house was afterwards inhabited by Cicero, who tried to block out the view of his neighbour and enemy, Clodius, by adding a couple of extra stories. Catiline, the impoverished *roué* who was eventually killed in a vain attempt to restore his fortunes by heading a revolution, also lived on the Palatine: so did the celebrated lawyer, Hortensius, famous for the discovery of roast peacock, and who had so remarkable a memory that on leaving an auction he could recite the entire sale-list backwards. The house of Hortensius was subsequently purchased by Augustus, who lived in it for the rest of his life. Religiously preserved as an historical monument despite the gigantic monuments of later emperors, it is to-day one of the most interesting features of the hill.

Was it, one wonders, by accident or design that the founder of the Empire chose to reside within a few yards of the historical hut of the founder of Rome? The home of a simple Roman gentleman, it betrays only by the faultless taste of its decoration the refinement, rather than the rank, of its owner. Particularly delightful is the amusing frieze, representing an Egyptian landscape crowded with figures—notice the admirably drawn camel in the foreground—in the right wing of the so-called reception-room. Egypt was then all the fashion, much as China became the mode among the neo-Augustans of eighteenth-century England: and indeed the frieze in the *salon* of Augustus and Livia is rather like some of the early Chinese wall-papers still to be found in some English country houses.

Above the front door a withered laurel-wreath once rustled dryly in the breeze—the proudest distinction a Roman could win, since it proclaimed that he had personally saved the life of a fellow-citizen: and here, in consequence of a dream, the Emperor would sit one day in every year, a bowl at his side, soliciting alms like a beggar from the passers-by. In the modest dining-room one seems to see him at his frugal meal—a little fish, some bread and cheese, and a few figs, with perhaps a slice of cucumber, instead of wine, to quench his thirst. Traces of the central-heating apparatus, still visible in the walls, remind us how acutely he suffered from the cold in winter. Not content with swathing himself in layers of warm under-garments, he scandalized conservative opinion by adopting the Gaulish fashion of wearing trousers! To contemporary opinion, that a Roman emperor should appear in trousers was almost as shocking as that a modern monarch should appear without them.

Of the magnificent group of public buildings erected

by Augustus on the Palatine, hardly anything has survived. Besides a temple of Vesta close to his house, they included a temple of Apollo, built of white marble, with doors of carved ivory, within which was a statue of Apollo by Scopas —a masterpiece of the fourth century B.C.—surrounded by the Muses, while above the soaring pediment stood the chariot of the sun-god drawn by coursers of gilded bronze. In front of the temple a superb portico of yellow Numidian marble contained statues of the fifty daughters of Danaus, in front of which were bronze equestrian statues of their ill-fated husbands. In addition to these were two libraries of Greek and Latin literature, restored by Domitian after the great fire of Nero, with a reading-room containing a bronze statue of the Emperor, fifty feet high, under the attributes of Apollo—perhaps a veiled allusion to the legend that the God had wooed the Emperor's mother in the guise of a snake. In the pedestal of the statue two golden chests guarded the famous Sibylline Books, said to have been brought to King Tarquin by the Sibyl of Cumae. Of all these wonderful structures and their contents little remains to-day beyond the platform of the great temple; and even of this the identification is by no means absolutely assured.

Tiberius built himself a palace on the Germalus, which —enlarged by Caligula—was connected by Nero with the imposing subway, or crypto-porticus, which we still see, to his own *Domus Transitoria* burned down in the terrible fire of A.D. 64. But by far the greatest builder of the Palatine was Domitian, who not only restored and transformed the earlier palaces of Tiberius and Caligula, but, filling up the centre of the hill with the ruins of the *Domus Transitoria*, utilized the artificial platform thus created to erect a gigantic series of buildings, whose completion left hardly a square foot of the hill unoccupied. In the centre

of the Palatine, approached by a lofty triumphal arch from the direction of the Arch of Titus, and enclosed on three sides by a splendid portico, rose the great State apartments. On the right was the basilica, where important cases were probably heard by the sovereign in person: on the left was the *lararium* or palace chapel: and between these was the immense throne-room, 160 feet long by 120 feet across —more than 30 feet wider than the nave of St. Peter's. This magnificent apartment, which was surrounded by lofty galleries for privileged spectators, was decorated by sixteen great columns of variegated marble, with ivory-coloured marble capitals, while in niches in the walls stood colossal statues of black basalt, two of which still exist at Parma.

Behind these three rooms one passed into the majestic peristyle, enclosing an elaborate and curious fountain in the form of a labyrinth: traces of what was probably the State drawing-room (*tablinum*) are still visible on the left. From the peristyle one entered the sumptuous banquet-hall, which was known as "the supper-room of Jupiter." Sixteen columns of granite soared to the lofty ceiling from a pavement of coloured marbles, the Imperial table in the apse being raised above the rest by a species of dais, while through large windows to right and left exquisite oval fountains delighted the guests with their refreshing sound and beautiful appearance.

East of these apartments lay the actual residential portion of the palace, covering an area nearly twice as large, together with the great hippodrome—a magnificent winter-garden, as it were, surrounded by colonnades and galleries, and adorned with flowers, fountains and statues: while yet another garden, likewise enclosed in porticoes and known as the Gardens of Adonis, was laid out on the Velia. Even

so, the palace was not sufficiently spacious for Domitian's successors, who actually increased the area of the hill by means of artificial platforms carried on huge arches, thus extending the cliff-like mass of buildings to the edge of the Nova Via on the north, and to the vicinity of the Circus Maximus on the south. Seen from without, the Palatine, by the end of the third century, must have presented almost the appearance of a single stupendous palace, the sun flashing on its bronze tiles, and turning its arched gateways and far-flung porticoes into cavernous gulfs of shade.

Imagination boggles at the thought of the enormous household of guards, officials and domestics that must have swarmed within the walls of the palace of the Caesars. There were butlers and super-butlers, not to mention a special butler for the officers of the guard: a *chef* Olympianly directing a perfect regiment of assistant-cooks: "tasters," who had the unenviable duty of tasting the Imperial dishes (in case of poison) before they were served to the Emperor —one wonders what they were paid: a superintendent of the Imperial wine-cellars: one keeper of the gold, and another of the silver, plate, besides various officials in charge of the lamps, table-linen, perfumes, etc. The subdivision of duties seems to have been remarkable. Not only was there one keeper of the Imperial robe and another of the State robes, but there were also keepers of the purple robes, of the morning costumes, of the Imperial shoes, and even of the overcoats, besides slaves whose sole duty, apparently, it was to fold up clothes after they had been worn. The funerary inscriptions of the Imperial household yield, strange to say, but one bath-attendant and one hair-dresser—no sinecure, his, considering the elaborate nature of the coiffures in vogue at various periods of the Empire: but this curious deficiency is perhaps balanced by the presence of a Lord High Keeper

of the Family Portraits and of the Lady-in-Waiting to the Imperial pet dog!

Here and there in sheltered corners of the Palatine one comes upon *graffiti*—drawings or scribblings on the walls —that permit us tantalizing glimpses of the life in the under-world of the great palace. That they are sometimes far from polite, or even respectable, in no way detracts from their value as genuine human documents. Most famous of all, of course, is that now preserved in the Terme Museum —the rude picture of a crucified figure with an ass's head found scratched on a wall in the school of the Imperial pages, or *paedagogium*, at the foot of the hill facing the Circus Maximus. Beside the cross a human figure stands in adoration, accompanied by the words in Greek, "Alexamenos worships his God." Evidently the Alexamenos thus derided was either a Jew or a Christian, both of whom were believed by the Pagans to worship a deity in the form of an ass. Of a different and more amusing nature was another *graffito*, likewise discovered in the *paedagogium* but unfortunately destroyed by a mischievous tourist. It represented a donkey turning a mill, with the Latin inscription, "Work, little donkey, as I have worked, and thou shalt have thy reward!" No doubt for the youthful pages life was often "a demnition grind" before they attained their coveted jobs in the Imperial civil service, and numerous inscriptions attest the joy of successful candidates at leaving the detested school. The inscription of one page has occasionally been "sub-edited" by another with interesting results. Thus an inscription, apparently of the time of Septimius Severus and Caracalla, in praise of their Majesties, has been emended by an exacerbated pupil so as to read (I translate roughly) "May their Majesties go to hell!"

"My eyes are closing up with sleep!" scribbled some

drowsy slave, doubtless on a particularly warm afternoon —or was it a sentry on night duty, trying to keep awake till his relief came? This particular *graffito* is on the wall of a small room of the palace of Tiberius, facing the Clivus Victoriae: near by is a spirited drawing of rope-dancers. Still more interesting is—or was, for it is now almost obliterated—the portrait of Nero scratched on the wall of one of the guard-rooms of the same palace facing the temple of the Great Mother. Another soldier has contributed a drawing of a ship. It was perhaps a self-satisfied scorner of these artistic efforts who superiorly scribbled, "Many have written many things on this wall, I nothing," to which a comrade promptly attached the sarcastic colophon, "Hear, hear!" Trifles, these, light as air: yet across the gulf of nineteen hundred years they speak to the imagination more intimately and distinctly than many things of far greater importance.

What memories crowd upon the mind as one wanders amid the waste of ruins on the hill! It was in the temple of Apollo that Sejanus, the all-ambitious minister of Tiberius, was arrested and dragged to execution, at the very height of his power, amid the hoots and execrations of the very men who, half an hour before, had vied with one another in obsequious flattery. Standing in the lovely gardens with which Cardinal Farnese, about 1550, covered—alas!—a great part of the palace of Tiberius, one seems to behold the half-crazed Caligula, with staring eyes and distorted features, roaming the midnight corridors of the palace, and shouting wildly for the dawn: or to hear his choking cries for help as he falls, covered with wounds, beneath the daggers of the conspirators. Here Otho, in attendance on Galba, and acutely apprehensive lest his plot against the Emperor were already discovered, was warned by his freedman that

the hour for action had arrived: here Vitellius, complacently reclined at dinner, watched his troops storming the blazing Capitol opposite, and the massacre of the supporters of Vespasian: and here, too, when all was lost, he listened from his useless hiding-place to the shouts and menaces of the soldiers who were seeking to kill him.

We may stand in the once magnificent peristyle of Domitian's palace, and see the lonely tyrant, a prey to God alone knows what furies of terror and suspicion, restlessly scanning the mirror-like walls for the assassins who were to strike him down at last. We may watch Commodus unsuspectingly taking the drugged wine-cup from the hands of his mistress, and her lover tiptoeing in, cord in hand, to strangle him as he lies insensible: or Pertinax rising hastily from dinner to meet the swords of the mutinous pretorians as they rush in from the great peristyle. The ruffian features of Caracalla rise before us, branded with his brother's murder, and the tragic figure of their mother, her robes still wet with her son's blood: and the incredible Elagabalus passes, drawn in a golden chariot by strings of naked girls, smothering his wretched guests in rose-leaves, or feeding his horses on the choicest grapes.

Slowly the western empire reels to its doom: Alaric and his Goths are at the gates of Rome: the silence of the night is shattered as they burst in through the Salarian Gate, and spread terror and death through the sleeping city. How vividly one can picture the panic in the great palace, the sobbing, screaming, praying women, the young princess Galla Placidia—her face ashy white against her gorgeous robe—huddled for sanctuary in the little, still-existing chapel of St. Cesarius. Then comes the sudden crash and splinter of the great doors, and the high exultant yell of the Goths as they pour in—wild figures grimy with smoke and blood

—over the bodies of the handful of defenders. Some forty years later the palace witnessed the cowardly murder of Aetius, the last able general of the west, at the hands of Galla's son, the worthless Valentinian III, who was himself assassinated soon afterwards during a review on the Via Labicana: while his successor, Maximus, escaping from the Palatine on the capture of the city by the Vandals, was stoned to death in the streets by the palace servants.

After the final extinction of the western empire in 496, the palace became the residence of the Gothic kings—Theodoric, Vitiges, Totila. Narses, the wily old soldier who finally overthrew the Gothic kingdom and restored Italy to the eastern empire, lived there till his death: the Emperor Heraclius is said to have been crowned by the Senate in the great throne-room in 629: and it was the official residence of the Byzantine exarchs, or viceroys, at Ravenna whenever they visited Rome. Pope John VII (705–7) even thought of converting it into a residence of the popes, but the design was abandoned by his successors, and the vast palace gradually sank into neglect and decay: until by the tenth century it was little more than a labyrinth of huge and awe-inspiring ruins, amid which a visitor undeterred by superstitious terrors might yet wander through halls lined with precious marbles, where the golden hangings yet mouldered upon the walls, and the majestic figures of gods and goddesses glimmered whitely like phantoms of a forgotten world.

On the eastern side of the Palatine monasteries and churches arose, mostly included later in the huge fortress of the Frangipani, which occupied a large part of the hill. Some thirty skeletons, many clearly injured by blows of axes or swords, discovered during the excavation of the great hippodrome, testify to the stormy history of the Palatine

in the Dark Ages. Rusticus, the nephew of Gregory VII, in 1084 held the Septizonium of Septimius Severus—the last ruins of which were pulled down in the sixteenth century by Sixtus V—against the German soldiery of Henry IV. Close to the little church of S. Sebastiano was a Benedictine monastery—S. Maria in Pallara—where Gelasius II was elected in 1118. The election was scarcely over before the Frangipani stormed the monastery, dragged out the aged pope by the hair, and flung him into a dungeon of the castle. The fortress was finally dismantled in 1257 by the orders of the Senator Brancaleone, who had himself suffered imprisonment in the Septizonium.[1]

Stripped of its exquisite marbles, its countless masterpieces of art plundered or destroyed, and its mighty edifices reduced to shapeless masses of brick or buried beneath the soil, the Palatine preserves none the less a glamour and a beauty to which the dullest imagination can hardly be impervious. Before we leave the great platform erected by Severus at the south-east corner, where the eye ranges from the Colosseum or the huge Thermæ of Caracalla to rest finally on the distant summit of the Alban Mount, let us look down upon the scanty remains of the gigantic Circus Maximus, and try to picture it at the height of its splendour, when, from the lofty altitude of the Imperial palace, the Court looked down upon the great race-course, the marble *spina* adorned with obelisks and gilded columns, the brilliant uniforms of the charioteers, and the vast audience

[1] The precise nature of the Septizonium is uncertain, but it seems to have formed a kind of ornamental façade towards the Via Appia, masking the huge substructures of Severus's additions to the Imperial palace. Numerous Renaissance drawings of the ruins show that it was composed of several rows (originally, perhaps, seven) of super-imposed columns.

of 200,000 people shrieking and waving in a frenzy of excitement as the sand scattered in clouds under the flying wheels.

Beside the recently begun excavations, where once rose a triumphal arch of Vespasian and Titus, one perceives the small, machicolated tower of a medieval mill. Mill and tower belonged to Jacopa de' Settesoli, wife of Graziano dei Frangipani—a lady whose warm-heartedness and intelligence so endeared her to St. Francis that he was wont to call her playfully, not "Sister," but "Brother" Jacopa. On one occasion he gave her as a pet a tiny lamb which he had rescued from the hands of the butcher. So devoted did it become that it would accompany her regularly to Mass, and even gently awaken her with its muzzle if she were late in rising for her morning devotions! On so pleasant a picture, in which the memory of the gentle saint of Assisi seems like a ray of sunlight escaping for a moment between the gloomy storm-clouds of the Middle Ages, we may well choose to linger as we bid farewell to the Palatine hill.

NOTE.—The question of where Augustus really lived on the Palatine cannot yet be said to have been conclusively settled. According to various leading authorities, followed in the above chapter, the residence of Augustus is to be recognized in the so-called House of Livia, the careful conservation of which up to the end of the Empire is otherwise difficult to account for. On the other hand, the most recent excavations (not yet accessible to the public) behind the Villa Mills have revealed remains, indubitably anterior to the great structures of Domitian, which may be those of the palace of Augustus, and of his new temple of Vesta (*vide* Professor Alfonso Bartoli, "Gli Scavi del Palatino," *Notizie degli Scavi*, 1929, fasc. 1, 2, 3).

CHAPTER III

THE VALLEY OF THE FORUM

THE name of the Forum is usually but incorrectly assigned to the whole of the enclosed area between the Arch of Titus at one end and the Via del Foro Romano, at the foot of the Capitol, at the other. The Forum proper, however, begins, not at the Arch of Titus, but at the temple of Julius Caesar: and, in the second place, in spite of the intrusion of the modern roadway, the portico of the Twelve Gods and the temples of Vespasian and Concord are just as much a part of it as the Rostra or the basilica Julia. On the other hand, the Curia and the Carcer—which are on precisely the same level despite the fact that the entrance to the Carcer is now about five feet below ground—belong, strictly speaking, not to the Forum but to the Comitium, which in origin at least was a wholly distinct area. Lastly, there is the stretch between the temple of Julius and the Arch of Titus, which belonged neither to Forum nor Comitium.

Let us begin by mentally sweeping out of sight and existence the whole of the actual monuments, and imagine that we are standing simply in a somewhat shallow valley, mostly swamp and marsh on the south and west, with a small brook—the Spinon—flowing in on the north, and out by the Velabrum valley to the Tiber. A rough track —the future Sacred Way—winds down from the Palatine township towards the villages on the Quirinal and beyond, passing on its way through the prehistoric burial ground,

part of which is now visible beside the temple of Faustina. As yet the valley lies wholly outside the early city, serving only as a cemetery or a pasture ground: gradually, however, it is absorbed by the growing expansion of the city, and a wide level space at the foot of the Quirinal—perhaps a primitive threshing-floor — is converted into the public "coming-together place," or Comitium, the civic centre of the community. Here is the first Senate House, or Curia, and here the market is held, laws are passed and public assemblies convened. Adjoining the Comitium on the south-west is the Vulcanal, a rocky area consecrated to the fire-god, Vulcan, where the bodies of the dead had possibly been cremated in still remoter times.

Half-way along the valley is the Regia, where dwells the king, who is also the chief priest or Pontifex Maximus of the community. Round the Regia, accordingly, cluster several shrines of especial sanctity—those of the household spirits (*Penates*), the spirits of the fields (*Lares*), the spirits of corn and harvest, and above all of the hearth-goddess, Vesta, "the Shining One," whose sacred fire is at once her symbol and her outward form. Day and night the holy fire is tended by the pure handmaidens of the goddess: no man, on pain of death, may set foot within their dwelling save the Pontifex himself, to whom perhaps they may have originally been sealed in a sort of mystic marriage, as the abbess of the Benedictines at Pistoia was mystically wedded to the Bishop of that city in medieval times. Bordered by these holy places, the ancient valley-track is now dignified with the name of the Sacra Via, or Sacred Way. The worship of Vesta is said to have been instituted by Romulus's successor, Numa the Sabine, the traditional founder of all Roman religion—a highly mysterious personage, impenetrably obscured by later legend, who probably reduced to a

definite system beliefs and practices of diverse origin and immemorial existence.

Around the Regia extended a large courtyard or reserve, known as the *Forum*, i.e. "the place out of doors," as distinguished from the dwelling itself. As the Sacra Via passed through it, it was doubtless open to traffic, while beside the residence of the Vestals, until a much later period, ran the "New Road," or Nova Via, of almost equal antiquity with the Sacred Way. It was here that in 390 B.C. an unearthly voice warned the Romans of the Gaulish invasion which took place soon afterwards in the same year, and among the ruins on the north of the house of the Vestals are still remains of what may be the altar subsequently erected on the spot in gratitude to the unknown but kindly divinity.

Precisely when the Forum became public property is not certain, but most probably under the Etruscan dynasty of the Tarquins, who drained the valley by the construction of the Cloaca Maxima, removed the residence of the king to a new palace on the Caelian, and completely transformed Rome from a mere hypertrophied hamlet into a city comparable to the Athens of the Peisistratidae. The walls enclosing the Forum were demolished, but its two arched gateways, probably because consecrated to the ancient solar deity, Janus, were simply connected by parallel walls so as to form a short passage with an arch at each end. Thus originated the historic shrine of Janus, which was closed only in time of peace, and contained an image of the god with two faces, looking in opposite directions.

Like all Pagan shrines, it was closed for ever by Imperial decree towards the end of the fourth century A.D. During the siege by the Goths in 537, more than 130 years later, an attempt was made by unknown hands to reopen the

temple by night, evidently in the forlorn hope that the god would come to the rescue of the city. But the doors were rusted fast in their sockets, and the design had to be abandoned. Nothing survives of the temple to-day, but the site is probably marked by the scanty remains of a medieval tower at the south-west corner of the basilica Aemilia.

After the institution of the Republic, the Pontifex—now elected like any other State official—lived, not in the Regia, but in a new building adjoining the house of the Vestals, and called in true republican fashion the Domus Publica. Shops (*tabernae*), called "Old" and "New" respectively, now sprang up in succession on the south and north sides of the Forum. Below the Capitol, where stood an ancient altar ascribed by tradition to Hercules, arose a temple of Saturn—the only one in Rome where it was not only customary but obligatory to worship with uncovered head, as in a modern church, and the first in which the use of tapers formed part of the ritual.

The festival of the god of agriculture lasted from the 17th to the 23rd of December, and was characterized by all kinds of amusements and merry-makings. On the triumph of Christianity the joyous traditions of the Saturnalia were transferred to Christmas, while its direct descendant, the Roman Carnival, died out only in the last century. The temple served also as a treasury, and the first act of Julius Caesar, when Rome fell into his hands in 49 B.C., was to seize the money therein in order to pay his troops, silencing with a threat the official who attempted to deter him. The actual remains of the temple belong to a slovenly restoration of the fourth century A.D.

At the other end of the Forum, in commemoration of a decisive victory over the Latin tribes at the Lake Regillus, was erected a temple to Castor and Pollux, who were

worshipped at Gabii, near the site of the battle. Later legend averred that the Twin Gods had actually led the Romans in the fray, and had then come in person to Rome to announce the victory and water their horses at the pool of the nymph Juturna, on which the three beautiful columns of the temple still look down. Its commanding position and lofty platform made it a popular rendezvous for public meetings, since the steps lent themselves admirably to the purposes of political oratory. The memory of the famous battle was celebrated twice a year, when the Roman cavalry, robed in scarlet and waving palms and olive branches, rode past in long procession on their way to the Capitol. The fact that it was generally alluded to simply as the "temple of Castor" lent point to the complaint of the consul Bibulus, colleague of Caesar in 59 B.C., that he suffered the fate of Pollux, since people talked jestingly about the consulship of "Julius and Caesar," ignoring Bibulus altogether. He had still better grounds for grievance later, when his stubborn opposition to Caesar's legislative proposals so infuriated the crowd that it rushed the temple steps and threw him off them into the mud!

Pliny tells a delightful story of a raven which made its nest in the temple during the reign of Tiberius, and became quite a public character. Perching on the Rostra, it would watch for the passing of well-known personages, including the Emperor himself, and greet them familiarly by name. On its death it received almost a State funeral. Borne on a bier, it was escorted by a great crowd of mourners, with music and garlands, to a spot beyond the city walls, and was there solemnly cremated! The temple was temporarily converted by Caligula into the vestibule of his palace on the Palatine, and the half-crazy Emperor, who boasted that he had made the two gods his doorkeepers, was accustomed

to stand between their statues so as to share the worship paid to them. The destruction of the beautiful building must have been effected at a comparatively early period, for the lane between it and the pool of Juturna was known as the "street of the three columns" at least as early as the fifteenth century.

The burning of Rome by the Gauls in 390 B.C. proved only a temporary set-back: temples and business premises alike soon re-arose in a more sumptuous style than before. It was probably about this time that a cistern called the *tullianum* from an obsolete word signifying a spring, was constructed beside the Comitium on the spot where, according to legend, the maiden Tarpeia had been wooed by Titus Tatius and induced to betray the Capitol to the Sabines. In later times the Tullianum was converted into the public dungeon of the city, where the accomplices of Catiline were strangled in 63 B.C. It was here that Sejanus, the fallen minister of Tiberius, was executed by order of the Senate, assembled in the neighbouring temple of Concord.

Important prisoners of war were also put to death in the Tullianum—sometimes strangled, like the unfortunate Gaulish patriot, Vercingetorix, defeated by Julius Caesar: sometimes left to perish of cold and starvation, like the Numidian king, Jugurtha. "By Hercules, how cold your bath is!" he exclaimed with a ghastly laugh, as his guards, plucking the gold rings from his ears, thrust him naked through the opening in the floor into the clammy darkness of his living tomb. Originally, doubtless, the Tullianum was considerably deeper than it is now. Its use as a place of execution was abandoned in the fourth century—probably in deference to the legend that it had been the prison of St. Peter. The "Carcer," or prison, above it, seems to have been built only about the beginning of the first century

B.C. It was used only to detain prisoners till their sentence was delivered, imprisonment as a penalty in itself being unknown to Roman law.

In 185 B.C. M. Porcius Cato introduced to the Forum a type of building which, though long in use in Greece, had hitherto been unknown at Rome. This was the *basilica*, a species of public hall with aisles on either side and usually surmounted by galleries in the interior, where lawsuits might be tried, business transacted, and—a result probably not reckoned on by the savage old censor—loungers and shady characters of all kinds might find a sheltered and congenial haunt. Cato is indeed the last person one would expect to find in the rôle of innovator—Cato the Hellenophobe, the very pattern of old Roman conservatism, who had brought about the destruction of Carthage with his perpetual "Delenda est Carthago!" and who was so ugly that hell itself, declared the wits, would be scared to let him in!

His basilica, of which no trace remains, set a new fashion: in 179 the basilica Aemilia was built, while nine years later another, the basilica Sempronia, was erected near the temple of Castor on the site of a house formerly occupied by Scipio Africanus, the conqueror of Hannibal. A curious description of the Forum and its various types about this time is preserved in a famous passage from a comedy by Plautus:

If it's perjurers you're wanting, go and look in the Comitium:
If you need a liar and braggart, try the shrine of Cloacina.
Then for dowry-squandering husbands you must search in the basilica (i.e. the Aemilia),
Where the draggled bona-robas and their fancy men foregather,
While the fish-mart swarms with eager snappers-up of dainty trifles.
In the lower Forum saunter the respectable and wealthy,
While the merely showy favour the canal-side in the middle.
Down beside the Lacus Curtius slanderers and wind-bags gather,
Brazen-faced disseminators of the most unfounded scandals,

Though, God knows, their *reputation wouldn't bear investigation!*
By the Old Shops you may borrow or invest your cash at interest,
But you'd be unwise to lend it to the crew at Castor's temple!
In the Vicus Tuscus there are men who'll sell their souls for money,
Whether it's to cheat in person, or to aid another's swindle.
Bakers, butchers and diviners will be found in the Velabrum.

The canal referred to in this unflattering passage is the little brook, Spinon, which had long been embanked and converted into the principal sewer (*cloaca maxima*) of the city. Though built or bridged over in various places, it was not completely covered in till the reign of Augustus, and the embankment seems to have long been a favourite promenade for the idlers for whose benefit Cato had wished that the Forum might be paved with sharp stones! Of the "shrine of Cloacina," the drain-goddess—identified with Venus as protectress of running waters—the actual base still existing on the steps of the basilica Aemilia dates only from the late empire. Situated above the Cloaca, it consisted of a small round platform approached by steps, on which stood two female figures with attributes of Venus. It was close to the shrine of Cloacina that Virginius was said to have stabbed his daughter Virginia to save her from the clutches of the wicked Appius Claudius—the dramatic but alas! apocryphal story familiarized by Macaulay.

Other memories than those of Plautus's "slanderers and wind-bags" cluster round the Lacus Curtius, or Curtian Pool—a relic of the marshes once occupying this part of the valley. Legend declared that the name commemorated the heroism of a young Roman knight named Mettius Curtius, who, when a yawning cleft opened in the Forum, and the oracle declared that only by the sacrifice of Rome's most precious possession could it be closed, exclaimed that Rome had nothing more precious than her brave sons, and leaped

with his war-horse into the chasm. The story may well mask an actual human sacrifice to the infernal deities on the occasion of an earthquake.

The site was always regarded as sacred, though by the time of Augustus the pool had become merely a dry well, into which gifts were thrown each year in honour of the Emperor. In A.D. 69, however, it was the scene of a tragedy. The reigning emperor, Galba, had just learned of the revolt of the prætorians under Otho: in great perplexity, he descended in his litter to the Forum, where he came face to face with the rebels. His bodyguard at once deserted, and his litter-bearers, overturning the litter in their flight, left the old man to be helplessly murdered beside the Curtian Pool. "Strike, if it be for the good of the State!" were said to have been his last words.

The Vicus Tuscus, which led from the Forum through the Velabrum to the cattle market, or *forum boarium*, was called "Tuscus," i.e. Etruscan, either because Etruscan merchants had their shops in it, or because it had been inhabited under the dynasty of the Tarquins by the Etruscan workmen from Veii employed in building the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus. In later times it was chiefly occupied by shops for spices and perfumes, and, according to Horace, the works of unsuccessful poets were taken there to be used as wrapping-paper, just as sonnets and rondeaux served Mme. Raguenneau to wrap up tarts and cream-puffs at the famous *patisserie* in "Cyrano de Bergerac."

By the beginning of the first century B.C. both Forum and Comitium stood in urgent need of reorganization. The civil wars had left many of the buildings in bad repair, or even in ruins, and the failure to maintain a uniform orientation had seriously wasted the available space. In 82 B.C. L. Cornelius Sulla made himself master of Rome,

and at once proceeded to a wholesale massacre of his political opponents. Day after day batches of bleeding human heads decorated the Rostra—the public tribune, then in front of the Curia, so called from the beaks (*rostra*) of captured war-galleys adorning it—as the heads of traitors once decorated Temple Bar. Having thus secured his position, he began a sweeping reorganization of the whole Forum area.

It was, perhaps, during the alterations of Sulla that irreparable damage was done to the so-called "tomb of Romulus"—the most mysterious monument in the Comitium. The "tomb" consists of an oblong block of tufa between two pedestals—once, probably, supporting couchant lions. Beside it are a truncated column of tufa, and a mutilated stele bearing portion of what is probably the oldest inscription in the Latin language—almost certainly not later than the fifth century B.C. It is written in "boustrophedon" style, up and down alternately as an ox ploughs a furrow, but as fully half the inscription is now missing, the full meaning is irrecoverable.

Above these venerable relics is a pavement of black marble, evidently intended to protect, or at any rate, to mark the site of, the monuments below: perhaps also to commemorate a certain enigmatical "Black Stone," which is alluded to by Roman writers. The Romans themselves could only hazard conjectures as to the meaning of these monuments, and modern archæologists are little better off. The most attractive hypothesis is that of Gamurrini,[1] who suggested that the so-called tomb is really an *heroon*, or shrine erected to the memory of the hero Romulus—or Quirinus, as he was called by the Sabines—in the centre of the city of

[1] La Tomba di Romolo e il Vulcanale, *Rendiconti dei Lincei*, IX, 1900.

which tradition declared him the founder, as the *heroon* of Theseus stood in the centre of Athens.

In 52 B.C. the exposure on the Rostra of the corpse of a demagogue named Clodius, murdered by his rival Milo on the Appian Way, led to a riot in which the Curia and many other buildings were burned down. Julius Caesar, who resuscitated the plans of Sulla, succeeded in rebuilding the Curia before his assassination. It was from the Rostra that Antony delivered his famous speech over Caesar's body, and in the orgy of ambition and revenge that followed, the tribune was once more crowned daily with its ghastly adornment of human trophies. Among the victims was Cicero, the opponent in turn of both Clodius and Antony: and Fulvia, widow of the one and wife of the other, came openly to gloat over the head of her enemy, and thrust her hairpin exultantly through the hated tongue.

In 29 B.C. the Forum witnessed the threefold triumph of Octavian, Caesar's grand-nephew, who now became, under the title of Augustus, supreme head of the Roman world. The founder of the Empire revived and added to the schemes of Sulla and Caesar. He enriched the basilica Aemilia with a magnificent portico, completed the basilica Julia, already consecrated by Caesar, and erected a temple and altar to the deified Julius on the spot where the Dictator's body had been cremated, together with a new Rostra Julia, adorned with the beaks of Antony's galleys captured at Actium. The old Rostra were transferred to their present site, where Julia, the daughter of Augustus, turned them nightly into a scene of shameless orgies, until Augustus, discovering the scandal, banished her for life.

The leading part which the Rostra had played under the republic was continued under the Empire. In A.D. 66 Nero, enthroned upon the Rostra, received the homage of

Tiridates, king of Armenia. Rome was *en fête* for the occasion: festoons of flowers decked the streets by day, and countless torches lighted them by night. Troops, who allowed no one to enter the Forum unless robed in a white toga and wearing a laurel-wreath, were drawn up in all the bravery of bronze armour and glittering standards, while thousands of citizens crowded every roof and vantage-point overlooking the Forum. So tremendous a roar greeted the appearance of Tiridates, that the king at first believed that the crowd was demanding his death. Then, ascending the Rostra, he knelt before Nero, who placed the crown upon his head.

Even more impressive must have been the funeral of Pertinax in 193. In front of the Rostra a wooden platform supported a canopy, whose columns gleamed with ivory and gold. Here, on a couch of the same precious materials, the body of the murdered emperor lay as if asleep, arrayed in triumphal robes, and guarded by a beautiful slave youth, wielding a fan of peacock feathers. The reigning emperor, Septimius Severus, was attended by the entire Senate, while the porticoes of the great basilicas enclosing the Forum were occupied by the Empress Julia Domna and the noblest ladies in Rome.

Slowly the long funeral procession defiled before the Rostra—choruses of boys and men chanting a threnody for Pertinax, effigies of famous men, bronze images of all the provinces of the Empire, each in its national costume, representatives of the army and the civil service, steeds chosen for their breed and beauty, and a long train of funeral offerings from all classes. Last of all came a golden altar, decorated with ivory and gems, after which Severus delivered a moving oration from the Rostra. The ceremony was concluded by another procession, in which the Emperor himself

took part, bearing the body to its cremation in the Campus Martius.

What the Rostra looked like in Imperial times is shown by a fourth-century relief on the Arch of Constantine. It was faced with marble, to which were affixed the bronze beaks, while above the cornice was a balustrade of bronze and marble, with an opening in the middle. Honorary statues stood at each angle, and a row of marble columns, likewise crowned with statues, surmounted the broad flight of curving steps at the back. At each end, probably, was one of the two interesting sculptured marble panels, often called the anaglyphs of Trajan, which were found in 1872 amid the foundations of a medieval house. Facing outwards, naturally, were the two reliefs representing the three sacrificial animals—the pig, the ram and the steer—which, sculptured in bold proportions so as to be seen to advantage from below, are conceived as moving in perpetual lustration round the outside of the building.

Of the two other reliefs, which were meant to be seen at close quarters, the one now facing the Rostra refers to the institution—probably that of Trajan in 101—of a fund for the maintenance of poor and orphaned Italian children. On the left, the Emperor, standing on the Rostra in company with his guards and attendants, is making a speech, while his audience responds with the salute made familiar by Fascismo to-day. The tenor of his remarks is illustrated by the group on the right, whose base reveals it as a group of statuary—perhaps actually erected either here or in Trajan's Forum—representing the Emperor enthroned, with Italia, holding two children, in front of him.

The second relief, commemorative of the Emperor's benevolence to the provincials, shows him directing the burning of a pile of account-books recording arrears of taxes.

In each of these reliefs the background is formed by the buildings of the Forum itself. Thus in the first, after an unidentified arch, is the Curia as it appeared prior to its reconstruction by Diocletian, the opening of the street called the Argiletum (the great centre of the Roman book-trade), the long portico of the Aemilia, and a statue of the satyr Marsyas beneath the *ficus ruminalis* (the tree under which Romulus and Remus were believed to have been found with the she-wolf) which stood near the present site of the anaglyphs. In the second relief, beginning with the Marsyas, we have the portico of the basilica Julia, the temple of Saturn, another arch, and the temple built by Domitian in honour of his father, Vespasian.

The triumphal arch raised by the Senate to commemorate the Eastern campaigns of Severus was, like the majority of such arches, intended merely as a colossal pedestal for the statue of the Emperor, standing proudly erect in his bronze chariot, attended by his two sons, Caracalla and Geta: reached only by a high flight of steps, it was inaccessible to traffic. On his death Severus bequeathed the Empire to his sons, but Caracalla soon contrived the murder of Geta, almost in the arms of their mother, and followed up the crime by putting to death thousands of the victim's friends and followers. Even the very memory of Geta was, so far as possible, obliterated: in the inscription on the arch, for example, his name was removed, and the words "Optimis Fortissimisque Principibus" substituted. Caracalla, whose reign is chiefly memorable for the famous edict by which every free member of the Empire became a Roman citizen, was eventually murdered at the instigation of his minister, Macrinus, who was only just in time to forestall his own execution.

Where the arch of Severus adjoins the Rostra, a battered core of brick, once resplendent with coloured marbles,

recalls the famous Umbilicus Romae—the ideal centre of the city—which was still existing in the eighth century. Somewhere near the other end of the Rostra stood the Golden Milestone (*milliarium aureum*), of which only a few fragments remain. Of marble and gilded bronze, it was engraved with the distances of all the principal cities of the Empire from the gates in the so-called "Servian" wall.

Up to the middle of the first century the area between the Forum proper and the ridge terminating the valley on the east had been occupied chiefly by private houses. The Arch of Titus did not yet exist: still less, Hadrian's magnificent temple of Venus and Roma, or the huge basilica begun by Maxentius and completed by Constantine. The transformation of this region was due to Nero, who not only raised the level of the Sacra Via, but converted it into a wide monumental avenue, enclosed between immense porticoes extending right across the valley and up the slopes on either side. These porticoes formed the vestibule to his gigantic new palace, the Golden House, the atrium of which, occupying the actual site of S. Francesca Romana, faced directly down the Sacra Via, and contained a colossal bronze statue of Nero, under the attributes of Apollo, 120 feet in height.

The porticoes on the north side of the Sacra Via were eventually destroyed in a fire, their last remains being cleared away to provide a site for the basilica of Constantine. Those on the south were converted by Domitian into public store-houses and magazines, while on the site of the atrium Hadrian in 135 built his great temple, which, restored by Aurelian in the third century, remained one of the glories of Rome until Pope Honorius I (625–38) sealed its doom by stripping it of its gilt-bronze tiles to adorn old St. Peter's. Hadrian, however, did not destroy the bronze statue of Nero.

Suspended in an enormous wooden scaffolding, and drawn by twenty-four elephants—the classical substitute for traction engines—it was removed to the vicinity of the Colosseum, where the brick base of its pedestal may still be seen.

Though the earliest symptoms of decadence had already appeared, the appearance of the Forum in the fourth century must have been one of astonishing magnificence. Nothing was to be seen but a forest of shrines, temples, basilicas, porticoes, triumphal arches and honorary columns, while the population of statues, many of them equestrian, of bronze, marble or even precious metals, was nearly as numerous as the cosmopolitan throng that filled the Sacra Via from morning till night.

Most wonderful of all would have been, doubtless, the occasion of an imperial triumph, such as that of Constantine himself in 312—the shouting, waving, flower-scattering crowd, the roofs swarming with spectators, the buildings gay with festoons and brightly coloured hangings. A crescendo of cheering heralds the advance of the long procession down the Sacred Way—the waggons laden with spoils, the huge banners painted with victorious battle-scenes, the slow sacrificial oxen, with their gilded horns and skins like white satin, the haggard captives in their chains. Behind the lictors in their scarlet uniforms come the musicians, dancing and singing. A roar of applause greets the appearance of the Emperor himself, standing, crowned with laurel and robed in scarlet and gold, in his gilded chariot drawn by milk-white steeds: and lastly, rank after rank, their weapons wreathed with laurel, the victorious legions like an army of bronze, singing in deep-throated chorus such stirring songs of triumph as seem to rise naturally to Italian lips.

Of the ancient temple of the Penates, swept away in Nero's great fire, the precinct walls erected by Augustus had

been converted in the fourth century into a spacious hall —the present church of SS. Cosmas and Damian—to which under Constantine was added the graceful little vestibule, believed till recently to be the shrine of Maxentius's young son, Romulus. This charming circular structure, so oddly baroque in style, still preserves its original bronze doors, the lock of which is still in perfect working order.

The Regia, though long since handed over to the use of the Vestals, still, probably, preserved much the same appearance as in 36 B.C., when it had been entirely rebuilt with solid blocks of white marble. On its walls were affixed the official lists, called *fasti*, of which many are now preserved in the Conservatori Museum.

The primitive hut of Vesta was now a graceful domed structure of marble, surrounded by a portico of Corinthian columns with bronze grilles between, and approached by a flight of marble steps. The many fragments discovered in excavation have recently been utilized to rebuild a section of the shrine. Beyond it lay the *atrium Vestae*, the dwelling of the Vestals, with its exquisite cloister of forty-eight Corinthian columns of green and white marble, surmounted by a similar number of rose-colour, where numerous statues of abbesses (*Vestales Maximae*), standing upon marble pedestals inscribed with their names and virtues, seemed to watch over and encourage the youthful novice.

Entering the order between the ages of six and twelve, the Vestal took her vows for a period of thirty years—ten years to learn her multiple religious duties, ten to practise them, ten to instruct those who should succeed her. Generally speaking, her life was a happy one: indeed, admission to the order was usually regarded as a subject for the warmest congratulations. So exceptional were her privileges, and so exalted the reverence in which she was held, that although,

on the expiration of her vows, she was free to leave and even to marry, most Vestals preferred to remain in the order for life.

Once a year—on March 1, the first day in the Roman calendar—the sacred fire was solemnly extinguished and relighted by the Pontifex, like the Holy Fire at St. Peter's at Easter. Its extinction at any other time was a serious calamity, and the Vestal in charge of it was severely punished by whipping. A Vestal who violated her vows of chastity was buried alive, and her paramour flogged to death in the Comitium. Somewhere below the modern Via Goito still remains, probably, the grim cell where the Vestal Cornelia —unjustly, it was said, condemned by Domitian—watched the darkness closing remorselessly about her, as the flame of the feeble oil-lamp guttered and sank and vanished irrevocably away.

Of the three fountain-basins in the court, that in the centre is the oldest. It was filled in during the reign of Severus, when the two smaller basins were substituted and the whole house enlarged. The room at the east end, with six smaller rooms opening off it, was perhaps a sort of sacristy: the remains of a mill in the corridor on the right are probably of a period subsequent to the occupation of the house by the Vestals. On the south side of the cloister is an ideal portrait-statue of Numa, probably of the reign of Trajan. Nearer to the entrance is a pedestal with an inscription commemorating the "chastity, modesty and learning" of some Vestalis Maxima, whose name, however, has been deliberately effaced, save for the initial C. Was she, perhaps, the very Claudia mentioned by the Christian poet, Prudentius, as having forsaken her order to become a nun in a convent near S. Lorenzo fuori?

The picturesque shrine at the entrance to the Atrium

Vestae contained the cult statue of Vesta, no image of the goddess being permitted within the temple itself. Some years after the formal prohibition of paganism in 394, out of curiosity the princess Serena, sister to the Emperor Honorius, paid a visit to the temple, within which was a statue of the Vestal Rhea Silvia, mother of Romulus and Remus by the god Mars. Discovering that the statue was still adorned with a valuable pearl necklace—the gift, no doubt, of some bygone worshipper—Serena transferred the pearls to her own neck, thereby drawing upon herself the curse of the last surviving Vestal, who chanced to witness the sacrilege. By a strange fatality, the curse was terribly fulfilled, for in 410, during the siege of the city by the Goths, Serena, accused of secretly intriguing with their leader, Alaric, was strangled "with edge of penny cord and vile reproach."

Though it undoubtedly suffered more or less heavily from the convulsions which racked the city during the last century of the western empire, the Forum long maintained its civic pre-eminence. In the seventh century it witnessed the dedication of the Curia and its companion building, the Secretarium Senatus, to St. Adrianus and St. Martinus respectively, as well as the dedication of an honorary column and statue by Boniface IV to the Byzantine Emperor, Phocas, in return for his permission to turn the Pantheon into a church. As this column is obviously of a far earlier period, it is impossible to say whether it was expressly plundered from some already existing building, or had been previously erected to somebody else.

But the most important memorial of this period is the basilica of S. Maria Antiqua, which, abandoned in the ninth century, was finally excavated in 1900–1. Originally, it would seem, the *atrium Minervae* built by Domitian—a sort of military archives, where the discharges of time-

expired soldiers were recorded—it is one of the earliest examples of an existing pagan building transformed for Christian purposes. It lay directly behind Domitian's great temple of Augustus, alike the centre of the Imperial cult and a monumental entrance, as it were, to the Palatine, guarded by the colossal images of the deified emperors of the past. Beyond the church one still sees the imposing ramp, affording direct communication between the temple of Augustus and the Domus Tiberiana above.

The atrium of the church—where excavation has revealed the impluvium of a building considerably earlier than the *atrium Minervae*—was adorned with frescoes: on the left of the entrance are fragments of the ancient ciborium. The interior of the church is also covered with frescoes, the most recent being of the eighth century, while some may possibly be as early as the sixth. They are the work of Greek monks, who sought refuge in Rome from the iconoclast emperors at Constantinople, and who proclaim their defiance in the long array of saints on the left wall, that seem assembled to protect the image of the enthroned Saviour in their midst. Above are a series of scenes from the Old Testament, in which the adventures of Joseph are depicted with amusing naïveté.

Especially interesting is the end chapel beyond, dedicated to the martyrs Quiricus and Julitta. The frescoes here were commissioned by Theodotus, the chief minister (*Primicerius*) of Pope Zacharias (732–52), both of whom are shown wearing the square nimbus which denotes living persons. In one painting Theodotus holds a model of the church, entitled "Sancta Maria quae appellatur antiqua." In the extremely well-preserved picture of the Crucifixion, the Christ is represented as fully dressed in the long robe known as a "colobium," and with open eyes—that is to say, not dead

but living. The practice of representing the Crucified as lifeless and almost nude became popular only about the twelfth century. On the opposite wall, to the right, is the figure of an aged saint, with three women, who symbolize the many martyrs whose names are known only to God—"quorum nomina Deus scit," to quote the touching inscription above.

Successive layers of frescoes are plainly distinguishable in the choir and apse. High up on the right of the apse, which is an addition of the monks, is a figure of the Virgin, crowned and enthroned like an empress of Byzantium, in robes stiff with gold and gems. Later on another layer has been added, representing the Annunciation, of which little remains but the head of the angel, superior to every other painting in the church.

One should also notice two paintings in the presbytery, interesting despite their technical crudity—a very large David bestriding a very small Goliath, and Isaiah consolingly informing the ailing King Hezekiah that he will certainly die. Probably both paintings were intended as prophecies of the eventual downfall of the iconoclast emperors.

Of the various sarcophagi in the church, some are originally pagan, but have been used over again by the Christians: for example, that of Clodia Secunda, in the right aisle, who died in 207 after living with her husband—so the inscription informs us—for more than seven years without a single dispute. In the right aisle is a Christian sarcophagus of the third to fourth century, which has likewise been used a second time. Its reliefs show the story of Jonah—a favourite symbol of resurrection—with Neptune and his trident to represent the sea: the Good Shepherd: the baptism of Christ: and two fishermen pulling in their nets, an emblem of Apostolic preaching drawing souls to God. In the centre

are the figures of a man reading a scroll and of a woman praying. Close to this sarcophagus is an octagonal fragment of the ambo, with an inscription of John VII (705–7), "Servant of the Mother of God."

By the beginning of the ninth century, the church being clearly in danger from the ruinous condition of the great buildings above on the Palatine, Leo IV (845–57) built a new church, S. Maria Nova (now S. Francesca Romana) in the ruins of Hadrian's temple of Venus and Roma. Already a house, or possibly another church, had been erected amid the ruins of the Aemilia, and a pretentious private mansion on the site of the Regia, while a corner of the Atrium Vestae had, perhaps, already been converted into the humble dwelling of some papal official.

In 847 Rome was shaken by a great earthquake, which wrought irreparable injury to the edifices of the Forum, and buried S. Maria Antiqua under the fall of the Domus Tiberiana. Still more destruction was done in 1084 during the appalling sack of the city by the Normans under Robert Guiscard. By the middle of the following century the Forum had become a waste of ruins and rubbish, where a handful of churches and convents—SS. Sergius and Bacchus, S. Salvatore de Statera, S. Maria in Cannapara, to mention only a few that have now entirely disappeared—formed a fitting complement to the rude baronial fortresses that raised their gloomy towers amid the crumbling memorials of gods and emperors.

The process of spoliation was carried to its utmost extent by the cultured brutality of the Renaissance, when the entire Forum area was so ruthlessly and persistently ransacked for building materials, especially for the new St. Peter's, that one can only wonder that so much has survived. By the seventeenth century the wheel had come full circle. A

grassy valley, where oxen pastured as in the days of Romulus, the Forum had lost even its historic name, and was known merely as the Cattle Field (Campo Vacchino). Its very identity was denied, some antiquarians maintaining that its true site was the Velabrum, while Cardinal Baronius assigned it to the vicinity of the Piazza Montanara. Not till the end of the eighteenth century, when for the first time archæology began to take the place of indifference or dilettanteism, and scientific excavation that of mere vandalism or greed, were the long-buried monuments at last able, like Dante and his companion, *ritornar nel chiaro mondo.*

CHAPTER IV

THE CAPITOLINE HILL

THE history of the Capitoline hill probably began with the establishment of a Sabine stronghold on its northern summit—now occupied by the Araceli and the Victor Emanuel monument. With the coming of the Etruscans, a strong Arx, or citadel, was erected in place of the earlier fort, and the hill became consecrated to Tarpeia, the eponymous goddess of the ruling Tarquin family. In later times, when the cult of Tarpeia had long fallen into oblivion, the Romans sought for an explanation of the name "Mons Tarpeius" still clinging to the hill, as well as of the custom of hurling traitors from its cliffs—probably on the side near the modern "Garden of the Altar," below which were the old quarries and the Carcer. Thus arose the well-known legend of the maiden Tarpeia, who had betrayed the citadel and reaped death as sole reward.

Not only was the hill considerably higher in early times, but it was deliberately scarped to render it the more impregnable. On the side facing the Campus Martius it was completely inaccessible, and topped with a battlemented rampart which formed part of the great city wall attributed in origin to King Servius Tullius: though the so-called "Servian" remains still visible are chiefly those of a rebuilding after the sack of the city by the Gauls in 390 B.C.

Originally, it seems, the Arx was the most important part of the hill. Here centred the first worship of Jupiter, and here too was the *auguraculum*, where the augurs inter-

preted the divine will, and sacrificed with secret rites the victims that were led hither in solemn procession along the Sacred Way. Perhaps, too, there was a cult, either of Tages, the Divine Child who, springing miraculously from a furrow, had instructed the Etruscans in the science of augury; or of Jupiter Puer, the infantile aspect under which the god was worshipped at Preneste and Terracina. The existence of such a cult would go far to explain why, in the Middle Ages, the hill was mysteriously associated with the presence of that other Divine Child—an association which, beginning with the singular legend of Augustus and the Sibyl, achieved concrete manifestation in the seventeenth century in the famous image of the Bambino of the Araceli.

Though there were no means of ascent from the Campus Martius, there were at least three approaches from the other side. The principal road, indeed the only one possible for vehicles, was the Clivus Capitolinus, which connected with the Sacra Via beside the temple of Saturn. Besides this, there were two flights of steps for pedestrians—the "Hundred Stairs" (Centum Gradus) near the present Piazza Montanara, and the "Scalae Gemoniae," or "Stair of Sighs," which must have been close to the modern steps opposite the Arch of Severus.

The Scalae Gemoniae, being close to the Tullianum, gained their ill-omened name from the fact that it was customary to expose on them the bodies of those who had been executed. There lay the accomplices of Catiline, and the fallen Sejanus: and there too the ex-emperor Vitellius was tortured to death, surrounded by a jeering rabble. One instance of touching fidelity relieves, though sadly, their sinister associations. Pliny tells the story of a dog which crouched beside the body of its dead master, and refused to

be coaxed or driven away. With pathetic blindness to the facts, it even stole some bread, and tried to force it between the dead lips: and when at length the corpse was dragged away and flung into the Tiber, the devoted dog sprang after it, and strove desperately to drag it to shore.

Though its foundation is traditionally ascribed to the Tarquins, the temple of Jupiter, or rather of the Divine Triad, Jupiter, Juno and Minerva, on the opposite summit of the hill, was not actually completed until after the establishment of the Republic. The irregularities of the site were overcome by immense labour, and the temple was erected on a huge rectangular platform of squared blocks of tufa. Though nothing remains of the temple itself, or of its successors on the site, this great platform is still in existence, while a large stretch of the temple podium is one of the most interesting and impressive features of the Museo Mussolini.

Since it at once became the head (*caput*) of the Roman religion, the new temple was called the Capitolium, a name which survives in the modern Campidoglio, applied to the whole hill. Built of wood, covered with gaily covered terra-cotta, it must strongly have resembled the reconstructed temple from Alatri in the garden of the Villa Giulia. The images of the three divinities were also of terra-cotta, and must have been very like the wonderful Apollo from Veii in the same museum—indeed, they were very possibly by the same artist.

Repeatedly destroyed by fire, the temple was rebuilt each time with ever greater splendour. In A.D. 69 it was set on fire during the storm of the hill by the soldiers of Vitellius, when the Flavian garrison, commanded by Vespasian's brother, Sabinus, was massacred almost to a man, and Domitian—then a youth—escaped only by hiding in the

temple-keeper's cottage. Rebuilt by Vespasian, and again burned down ten years later, it was finally restored by Domitian with unprecedented magnificence, at a cost of nearly three millions sterling.

Nearly all the great religious and State processions of Rome were connected with the Capitolium. The triumphs accorded to victorious generals were fundamentally a tribute to Jupiter himself: painted and robed to represent the deity, and standing in a gilded car resembling the great quadriga on the apex of the temple, the victor ascended the Clivus Capitolinus to lay his wreath of laurel on the knees of the Best and Greatest of the Gods. Julius Caesar, who mounted the Clivus between two files of twenty elephants holding lighted torches in their trunks, even climbed the temple steps on his knees—an example of devotion followed also by Claudius.

At once more and less fortunate than its predecessors, the temple of Domitian outlived both its own glory and that of the Empire. Closed for ever in 394, its bronze doors were removed to Constantinople, while in 455 the Vandals stripped the bronze tiles from the roof, thus leaving the building a prey to the elements. By the tenth century, the once glorious edifice seems to have fallen into utter ruin. So complete was its disappearance that only in the last century was it even ascertained beyond doubt on which summit of the hill it had once stood.

In the imagination of the Middle Ages, the "Golden Capitol" was transformed to a marvellous building of gold and silver, with a roof of glass, and walls studded with jewels. Within this enchanted palace the wizard Virgil had placed magical statues, one for each province of the Empire, which told the Emperor whenever rebellion threatened. Up to the nineteenth century it was likewise a

popular belief that in a cavern of the hill Tarpeia sat entranced, covered with gold and jewels. This last fantasy was perhaps connected with a Mithraic grotto, existing beneath the Araceli so late as the sixteenth century, and containing a figure of Mithras (now in the Louvre) which was commonly mistaken for that of a woman.

Supreme among the edifices of the Arx on the opposite summit was a temple of Juno Moneta (so called from its vicinity to the Mint), erected in 343 B.C. At least as early as the fifth century, a little church, S. Maria de Capitolio, was built on the site of the temple: in all probability, where is now the transept of the Araceli. Here, according to a very early legend, Augustus, already warned by the Sibyl of Tibur, had erected an altar "to the First-Born Son of God," whom he had beheld with His Mother in a vision. The vision of the Emperor is naïvely represented on a curious Cosmatesque altar below the porphyry urn said to contain the relics of St. Helena, which probably marks the site of the altar of the early church.

The actual church was built in the thirteenth century by the Franciscans, in whose hands it has ever since remained. Though largely transformed later, interesting traces of the thirteenth-century Gothic basilica still survive, especially on the exterior. The name of S. Maria in Araceli—perhaps referring to the mythical altar of Augustus—dates from the fourteenth century. Within, the splendid Renaissance ceiling, commemorating the victory of Lepanto, contrasts curiously with the columns of the nave, plundered at random from various ancient buildings. On one of them, taken evidently from the Palatine, is the inscription, *a cubiculo Augustorum*—"from the Imperial bed-chamber." On what strange dreams must it not have looked down!

From the importance and variety of its sepulchral monu-

ments, the Araceli might well be called the Westminster Abbey of Rome. The tomb-slabs in the pavement alone, almost an epitome of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, range from the church architect and the humble convent gardener to members of the noblest Roman families, together with the knightly followers of Henry VII of Luxembourg, slain during the desperate street fighting of May and June, 1312. In the left transept is the tomb of Cardinal Matteo Aquasparta: General of the Franciscans, and an intimate friend of the great Boniface VIII, he was rebuked by Dante in the *Paradiso* for his laxity in maintaining the Rule. The painting of the Madonna and Saints within the niche is attributed to Pietro Cavallini, the Master with whom Giotto seems to have been temporarily associated in Rome. The statue of Leo X, close by, is certainly one of the most amusing things that ever claimed to rank as a work of art.

The art of the Roman *marmorarii* is well represented in the Araceli. Very charming, as well as interesting for its details of costume, is the thirteenth-century mosaic in the Cappella di S. Rosa of St. Francis presenting a kneeling Senator to the Virgin. The two splendid pulpits appear to have been made out of a single original ambo. Beautiful, too, is the tomb of the Senator Luca Savelli in the right transept: an ancient pagan sarcophagus, where half-nude fauns dance joyously amid huge garlands of fruit and flowers, is crowned by a little Gothic shrine of the Virgin, probably by Arnolfo di Cambio. Christian above, pagan below, it might well stand for a symbol of Rome herself. The tomb of Luca's mother, opposite, supports the effigy of his son, Honorius IV, which was formerly in old St. Peter's. So crippled by gout that he was seldom able to stir from the Savelli palace on the Aventine, and was compelled to use a

mechanical device for the elevation of the Host during Mass, his able and energetic government made him deeply regretted by the Romans after a reign of barely two years.

The famous Pinturicchio frescoes in the Bufalini chapel; a fresco of St. Anthony by Benozzo Gozzoli; a tomb-slab by Donatello; and two fine monuments by Andrea Bregno —especially that of Cardinal Louis d'Albret, a kinsman of Louis XI—are some of the many treasures of the fifteenth century in the Araceli. The figure of St. Michael in the d'Albret monument is particularly good, and one feels a lively sympathy with the little nude human soul in the Archangel's scales, wriggling frantically away from the clutching talons of the demon. Historically interesting is the tomb-slab of Catharine, Queen of Bosnia, who fled to Rome from the Turks in 1466, bequeathing her kingdom to the Pope on her death twelve years later.

Legend says that the famous olive-wood image of the Bambino was carved by a monk of Jerusalem, which may well be true. The first mention of it is in 1629. In the revolution of 1849 the Pope's State coach was saved from destruction by a happy suggestion that it should be used for conveying the Bambino to the bed-sides of persons dangerously ill, and though the coach is no longer in use, the Bambino still holds its place as Dean, so to speak, of the medical faculty in Rome. With a gold crown on its head, and its body enclosed in a perfect mummy-case of brooches, rings, watches, chains and other offerings, it presents a most curious spectacle. In the glass case containing it are numerous letters personally addressed to it—one with the appealing signature, "From another child." At Christmas-time, placed in a special chapel in the church, it takes part in an elaborate Presepe, or representation of the Nativity,

while small children—generally of the poorer classes—regale it with verses and sermons composed specially in its honour.

In 1265 Charles of Anjou [1] was invested with the Senatorship in the cloisters. Before the altar in 1347 were laid the bodies of the Colonna nobles, slain by the followers of Rienzi at the Porta S. Lorenzo, while their mourning wives and sisters were brutally driven from the church by order of the Tribune, who threatened to throw the bodies into the city ditch. Here too, in 1442, St. Bernardine of Siena moved a repentant audience to abjure such sinful vanities as false hair and playing cards—more successful than an earlier revivalist from Bergamo, who had found the Romans the stoniest of stony ground. They criticized his Latin, laughed at his reproofs, and called him a fool when he hinted at a collection!

The Araceli, indeed, was the Forum of medieval Rome. The representatives of the thirteen *rioni* of the city met here in council: popular leaders thundered from the pulpit, as from another Rostra, against the tyranny of the nobles or the pretensions of the Popes. Executions even took place occasionally at the head of the great stair—long the only approach to the Capitol, save for stony paths and goat-tracks. Set up before the church in 1347 in gratitude for the cessation of the plague, the steps had been taken from the great temple of Sarapis, which Caracalla had erected on the slopes of the Quirinal, where a single immense fragment of the pediment—one hundred tons in weight—still lies within the Colonna gardens.

The civic pre-eminence of the church was due to its proximity, not only to the important market then at the

[1] The Conservatori contains an extremely interesting portrait-statue of Charles, probably by Arnolfo di Cambio.

foot of the hill, but to the Palace of the Senator, which, then as now, was the centre of Rome's corporate existence. Defended by battlements, towers and drawbridge, the communal palace stood upon the massive remains of the ancient Tabularium, or Public Records Office, founded in 78 B.C. The lower portion of the Tabularium, which, in surprisingly good preservation, still overlooks the Forum, was used in the Middle Ages partly as a prison, partly as a repository for salt.

Here in 1143, flinging off their allegiance to the Papacy, and aided by the patriotic Arnold of Brescia, the Romans had re-established the ancient Republic under a Senator, or Senators. Naturally the Popes did not tamely acquiesce in the loss of their power, and Lucius II was actually killed while leading an assault against the popular fortress. It was not until the accession of Boniface IX in 1389 that the last embers of independence were finally stamped out. Greatest of all the Senators of medieval Rome was the celebrated Brancaleone degli Andalo of Bologna, as beloved by the people as he was feared and hated by the nobles. When he died in 1258, the Romans honoured his memory by enclosing his head in a costly urn, and setting it on a tall pillar on the Capitol!

Amid the records of the time one comes with some surprise upon an English name—that of Master Matthew of Belvoir, an English master-baker. In 1257 he headed a revolt, which, breaking out at the Capitol, drove the Pope to seek safety at Viterbo. The Popes of the Middle Ages, indeed, when not actually murdered, were usually well accustomed to flying for their lives from their infuriated subjects—only to be, a little later, as fervently entreated to return. It is, however, a curious coincidence that the revolt headed by an Englishman should have broken out at the

foot of a tower owned by a noble named Giovanni Bovio—or John Bull!

The historic Clivus Capitolinus was now a squalid alley called "Roast Beans Lane" (Vicolo delle Fave Toste); the very name of the Capitol had been degraded to that of "Goat Hill" (Monte Caprino); and the gaunt frame of the gallows dangled its hideous burdens where once had towered the glorious fane of Jupiter. Yet that the Capitol still exercised its spell on men's imaginations is evident from the pride with which Petrarch accepted the offer of the Romans to crown him in 1341 as poets had been crowned in antiquity. The fantastic ritual of the ceremony was thoroughly in keeping with the half-ruinous palace, itself built upon a ruin, the gaily dressed throng of nobles, and the ragged onlookers jostling for places at every door and window.

Robed in the royal mantle lent him by King Robert of Naples, Petrarch entered the hall to the sound of fifes and trumpets. "Long live the Capitol and the poet!" yelled the mob, as the Senator placed a laurel-wreath on Petrarch's head. It is said that an excited lady admirer poured, by mistake, a phial of corrosive liquid, instead of perfume, over the poet's flowing locks, with disastrous results! But this story, let us hope! is too good to be true.

At the foot of the steps leading to the palace entrance was the marble group, now in the garden of the Museo Mussolini, of a lion devouring a horse. The lion was regarded as a symbol of Rome, and a live lion was occasionally kept on the Capitol as two wretched eagles and an unhappy she-wolf are kept there nowadays. Sometimes it was made to act as executioner, and an unfortunate cleric thus suffered the fate of Daniel in 1328. Even the marble lion had its penal aspect. Bankrupts, for example, were condemned to bestride it, with mitres on their heads and honey smeared

on their faces. In 1354 the great condottiere, Fra Monreale, treacherously made prisoner by Rienzi, was executed beside it: and two months later Rienzi himself was stabbed to death on the same spot by the enraged mob.

In the latter half of the fourteenth century Rome was controlled, to a great extent, by the powerful Guild of Crossbowmen and Shieldbearers, whose leaders, called Banderesi, or "bannermen," occupied a building on the site of the present Conservatori palace. The sole memorial of the Banderesi [1] is an ancient cinerary urn, roughly sculptured with the figures of a crossbowman and a shield-bearer below the arms of the Republic. Taken from the mausoleum of Augustus, it has evidently been converted into a measure for grain (*rugitella del grano*). The other side of the urn still bears its original inscription, showing that it once contained the ashes of the elder Agrippina—daughter of Agrippa, granddaughter of Augustus, and mother of Caligula!

One of the strangest memories of the Capitol is associated with the year 1485, when the body of a beautiful young girl was accidentally found by some workmen while digging near the Villa of the Quintilii on the Appian Way. It was enclosed within a sarcophagus and thickly coated with a kind of aromatic paste, and despite the passage of nearly fifteen centuries was as fresh, as perfect and as healthy of complexion as though still living. The hair was black, the red lips, half parted, disclosed pearly white teeth; the limbs were soft and flexible. Publicly exhibited at the Conservatori palace, this mysterious apparition of antiquity evoked such excitement that after three days the authorities, by order of the Pope, buried the body secretly by night at the foot of the Pincio.

[1] In the Conservatori Museum.

The transformation of the piazza to its present appearance was begun early in the sixteenth century. The plans were drawn up by Michelangelo, but little was done in his lifetime save to transport thither from the Lateran the equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius. This famous group, which had escaped destruction in the Middle Ages through being luckily mistaken for Constantine, the first Christian emperor, has had a curious history. In 966 the rebellious prefect, Peter, was hanged from it by the hair by Otto I: the murdered anti-pope, Boniface VII, was flung at its feet in 985. On festal occasions it was clothed in a scarlet mantle, trimmed with vair, while in 1368 the horse's nostrils had run with wine to celebrate the knighthood of Rienzi. The statue was originally gilded—traces of the gilt are, in fact, still visible—and the figure of a captive barbarian probably crouched beneath the horse's lifted forefoot. In the seventeenth century an unearthly voice issuing nightly from the statue alarmed the superstitious, till it was discovered that the sounds proceeded from some unfortunate frogs which a practical joker had introduced through a hole in the metal!

With various modifications, Michelangelo's plans were eventually carried out by 1655, the monumental ramp, or *cordonata*, being designed by Giacomo della Porta. The old Senatorial Palace, now the Town Hall of Rome, was given a new façade, and adorned with an ancient statue of Minerva, restored to represent the goddess Roma, together with the two river-gods of the Nile and the Tigris. The latter, however, was made to represent the Tiber by adding the figures of the Twins, and changing the tiger's head into that of a wolf. The old Conservatori palace was completely transformed, and a new palace—the present Museo Capitolino—built facing it, the two palaces converging

gently towards the Palazzo Senatorio so as to give a more spacious effect to the piazza. The monumental balustrade facing the Campo Marzio was adorned with statues and other antiques, including the large statues of the Dioscuri, which had been found in the Ghetto.

One of the first visitors of consequence to the renovated Capitol was the ex-queen Christina of Sweden—only, however, after six whole months of diplomatic wranglings, since the Conservators, in accordance with a jealously defended privilege, insisted on receiving the queen with their hats on! Despite her indignation, Christina had to give way. The Conservators' hats remained firmly on their heads, and only Marcus Aurelius, bareheaded on his steed, displayed the habitual courtesy of one sovereign towards another!

The recent demolition of the commonplace buildings clustered at the foot of the Capitol in the Via Tor de' Specchi and the Via Giulio Romano, if they have proved of somewhat dubious benefit to the aspect of the hill, have at least led to an interesting discovery. Beside the steps of the Araceli stood, up to 1929, the church of S. Rita, a graceful work by Domenico Fontana. Its removal has revealed the remains of the early medieval church of S. Biagio sub Capitolio, including a tiny bell-tower, and a thirteenth-century fresco of Christ between the Virgin and St. John. Below is revealed the upper part of a large Roman building, of the second century, seven stories high, the ground floor of which, occupied by shops, has been buried to a depth of something like thirty feet. The excavation of this building, the first of its kind ever discovered in Rome, is thus slowly bringing to the light of investigation yet another secret of the gigantic palimpsest that is modern Rome.

CHAPTER V

GOLDEN HOUSE AND COLOSSEUM

BEYOND the upper end of the Via Annibaldi opens out one of the most interesting views in Rome. Almost immediately in front towers the mighty mass of the Colosseum—looking, from this side, almost as intact as when first built. Further away, the majestic Arch of Constantine commemorates his victory over Maxentius at the Milvian bridge in 312—a victory of such far-reaching consequence to the future of Christianity and civilization that the great arch might well be regarded as a monumental portal between two worlds, the old and the new.

A little in front of the arch are the remains of a fountain known from its shape as the *meta sudans* or "sweating goal." In the background, crowning the green slopes and cliff-like ruins of the Palatine, are the little church of S. Sebastianello, with its tenth-century frescoes, and its strangely assorted associations with St. Sebastian and the Papessa Giovanna,[1] and the church and monastery of S. Bonaventura beyond, while to the right the ruined apse of Hadrian's temple of Venus broods mournfully over the fallen fragments of its mighty colonnade.

O admirabile Veneris idolum
Cuius materiae nihil est frivolum . . .
Quo fugis? amabo, cum te dilexerim?
Miser, quid faciam, cum te non viderim?

[1] See note at end of chapter.

The last dying strain of paganism seems to linger like a sigh upon the air.

Within the pleasant public gardens which have recently been laid out above the Via Labicana, is the entrance to the ruins of Nero's wonder-palace, the Golden House. Seizing the opportunity afforded him by the tremendous conflagration of A.D. 64, Nero appropriated an area of the city, nearly as extensive—if Rivoira's estimate is correct—as Hyde Park, or more than four times that of the Vatican, including the gardens, St. Peters, and the piazza. The vestibule, as we have seen, extended as far as the Forum, while the atrium, with its colossal image of the Emperor, occupied the ridge where S. Francesca Romana stands to-day. Beyond it a great peristyle looked down upon an artificial lake, on the far side of which the waters of the Claudian aqueduct fell in a cascade of foam. Buildings resembling a miniature city lined the shore of the lake, backed by dense woods teeming with game, while northwards extended cornfields, vineyards, and broad meadows stocked with herds of animals, both wild and tame. No wonder that voices were heard, complaining that Rome had been turned into a single house, and ironically advising the citizens to migrate as quickly as possible to Veii before the house extended there too!

The actual palace, situated on the Oppian, faced due south. Its description by Suetonius reads like a fairy-tale. It contained, he tells us, porticoes 1,000 feet long: there were rooms entirely overlaid with gold, and adorned with jewels and mother-of-pearl: from the perforated ivory ceilings flowers and perfumes were scattered upon the guests. The principal banquet hall was circular, and revolved perpetually day and night, in imitation of the earth. The decoration throughout was designed and executed by Fabullus, the greatest painter of the time, who devoted his entire life to

the work. "At last I am lodged as a man ought to be," was all that Nero remarked on taking possession.

Of this amazing pleasure-house part was pulled down later by the Flavians, part converted by Titus into a public bathing-establishment—remains of its entrance portico are still visible near the Colosseum—part was swept away by a fire in the following century. Only the ground floor survived, which was utilized by Trajan as a foundation for the magnificent *thermæ*, with gymnasia, race-courses, libraries and winter-gardens, which he inaugurated in 110.

Remembering the fantastic splendours, and still more fantastic revelries, of the Golden House, a sense of melancholy steals over the spirit as one explores its chambers and corridors, now dank, lifeless and gloomy. From the exterior only the foundation walls of Trajan are visible, but a short flight of iron steps brings us at once to the first remains of the Domus Aurea—the bases of two columns belonging to the immense portico described by Suetonius. Amid the subsequent labyrinth of rooms, passages and crypto-porticoes, one still finds notable survivals of the decoration in painting and stucco that once filled the vast palace with brightness and splendour. Especially remarkable are the so-called Hall of the Golden Ceiling, in the centre of the vestibule connecting the two wings of the palace, and the richly decorated room where the famous group of the Laocoon was discovered in 1506. The paintings in these rooms are almost miniature-like in their smallness and delicate finish.

Strange it is, too, to enter the actual private apartments of the Imperial pair—now, unhappily, almost entirely bare of decoration. These apartments were fronted on the south by the great portico, while on the north they opened on a peristyle, over 150 feet wide, now mostly buried, and intersected by the massive foundation walls of Trajan's

baths. In the centre of the peristyle are the remains of a fountain, from which was taken the enormous porphyry basin in the Sala Rotonda of the Vatican.

Between the peristyle and the portico, and separating the two Imperial suites, is the dining hall. It was, perhaps, in this very room that Nero, while reclining at dinner, received the despatches telling him that his last troops had deserted their allegiance. Losing all self-control in his rage and terror, he sprang to his feet, kicked over the table, tore the despatches to shreds, and, catching up two valuable cups, dashed them in fragments on the floor.

On the accession of Vespasian, he drained the artificial lake in the grounds of the Golden House, and, on the site thus obtained, laid the foundations of an immense amphitheatre, whose proportions soon acquired for it the title of the Colosseum. Begun in A.D. 72, it was formally opened by Titus eight years later with inaugural games lasting for one hundred days. Women as well as men fought in the ranks of the gladiators, and, since the arena was not at first provided with underground cells and corridors, it was occasionally flooded, and the audience treated to the thrilling spectacle of a sea-fight.

Almost from the beginning the Colosseum seems to have been regarded as the supreme symbol of Rome. The impression which its towering mass made during the Dark Ages on the imagination of the northern pilgrim is seen in the current saying recorded by the Venerable Bede, "While the Colysaeus (*sic*) stands, Rome will stand: when the Colysaeus falls, Rome will fall: when Rome falls, the world will fall." Even to-day, it seems to embody the power and ruthlessness of Imperial Rome as nothing else does or can. It is hard to realize that nearly two-thirds of the huge structure have perished, and still harder when one

learns that even now it measures 157 feet in height, and nearly a third of a mile in circumference.

In the outer wall of the amphitheatre we notice innumerable holes—made by the pillagers of the Middle Ages in order to wrench away the iron clamps which formerly fastened the great blocks together. At the summit of the building are a series of stone rings and corbels: in these were placed the poles supporting the immense awning, which sheltered the spectators from sun or rain. Above each of the ground-floor arches one may still see, incised, the number by which each of the public entrances was distinguished: of these entrances there are 76, besides four State entrances which bore no number—one at each end, and one on each side of the building. All round the Colosseum, at a little distance, ran a series of stone posts, five of which yet remain in position at the south-east: by linking these together an outer barrier was established for the purpose of keeping back the crowd. Once past the barrier, the visitor proceeded to the particular entrance assigned to him: "and the entrances," as Gibbon remarks, "were contrived with such exquisite skill, that each person, whether of the senatorial, the equestrian, or the plebeian order arrived at his destined place without trouble or confusion."

According to some authorities, the aisles leading to the best seats were lined with glass cut and faceted like the jewels of an Aladdin's cave. The two State entrances on each side of the building were reserved for the Emperor, the court, and grand dignitaries generally. They are wider and loftier than all the rest: their walls were lined with precious coloured marbles, and their vaulted ceilings were covered with designs in moulded stucco, richly stained and gilded. Suggestive traces of the decoration are still to be seen in the entrance on the north side.

As we emerge into the open interior of the building we begin to realize more clearly the destruction that time and vandalism have wrought, leaving nothing but a colossal shell. So complete is the ruin that the visitor has some difficulty in grasping how the seats were formerly arranged. The oval space in which we are standing—half of it excavated to reveal the passages beneath—was the *arena*, so called from the sand scattered thickly over it during the games. Round the arena ran a broad platform or *podium* containing three rows of marble thrones, "some of which, transformed into episcopal chairs in our medieval churches, are still in existence" (*Lanciani*). These thrones, rendered more comfortable by silken cushions, were reserved for the Senate, visiting royalties, foreign ambassadors, and other distinguished persons. In the centre of the south side was the Imperial box or *pulvinar*, while precisely opposite were the six thrones reserved for the Vestal Virgins. The *podium* was raised sufficiently high to protect the occupants against attacks by wild beasts, but in case any of the animals should prove more than usually agile, there was also a metal grille, which on special occasions was often gilded.

Above the *podium* extended two tiers of cushioned marble seats for the knights, while higher still was a portico containing wooden benches for the citizens of the better class. The roof of the portico provided standing room for the poorer spectators. Lastly, on the very summit of the building, perched vertiginously the sailors who had been specially brought from the great naval port of Misenum to operate the great awning.

Of all this scarcely a trace is left to-day. Not an inch of marble remains *in situ*, and the topmost story still shows the careless and tasteless restoration carried out in the third century after a fire which required seven battalions of fire-

men (*Vigiles*) and two detachments of marines—not to mention the providential occurrence of a cloudburst—to get it under control. But by far the greatest destruction was wrought by earthquakes. An inscription now in the principal entrance to the arena records the restoration which was effected after an earthquake in 508 by the City Prefect, Decius Marius Venantius Basilius. In the fourteenth century the whole of the southern half of the exterior walls collapsed bodily outwards, and so vast was the mass of fallen stones as to require 400 years and fifteen generations of stone-cutters and lime-burners to exhaust it. Fresh damage was done by another earthquake in 1705. The immensity of the quarry thus formed, the largest within the walls of Rome, may be gauged by recalling how many churches, palaces and other structures, from St. Peter's to the now destroyed harbour of the Ripetta, were built wholly or in part with materials from this one source.

Fifty thousand spectators could be accommodated in the amphitheatre, of whom 45,000 were provided with seats.

"The air," to quote the description of Gibbon, "was continually refreshed by the playing of fountains, and profusely impregnated by the grateful scent of aromatics. In the centre of the edifice . . . the arena successively assumed the most different forms. At one moment it seemed to rise out of the earth, like the garden of the Hesperides, and was afterwards broken into the rocks and caverns of Thrace. . . . In the decoration of these scenes the Roman emperors displayed their wealth and liberality: and we read on various occasions that the whole furniture of the amphitheatre consisted either of silver or of gold or of amber."

Some emperors, indeed, even went to the extravagance of covering the arena with cinnabar or borax instead of with sand.

What pictures rise before the imagination as we stand here! Around us—no longer in ruins but splendidly entire—climbs the vast oval, tier upon tier of faces all kindled

with the same hideous delight in cruelty, from the Emperor in his purple and his jewels to the rag-picker from the Subura, reeking of dirt and garlic. The pale-blue smoke of the perfume-burners wavers up, through a roar of savage applause, to where a ray of afternoon sunlight filters slantingly through the lofty awning; and in the centre of the broad arena is sometimes a little group of Christians, their eyes fixed steadfastly upon the doom approaching them: sometimes a battue in which hundreds of men and animals take part, sometimes a gladiator sprawling helplessly upon the sand, while his opponent, his weapon at his throat, looks triumphantly to the spectators whether to spare or to slay. Often enough the verdict, given with a gesture of the thumb, was "Death"; the blow fell, a couple of slaves ran forward with ropes and hooks: and the spectacle proceeded as before, while the corpse, already forgotten, was dragged out through the low doorway still visible at the southern end of the arena. Death alone, indeed, was often insufficient to gratify the jaded passions of the Roman populace: and hence tableaux were ingeniously devised in which criminals, disguised as well-known characters of mythology or legend, were subjected to tortures as various as they were horrible.

It was through the great portal at the west end that the gladiators entered in procession—Samnites and Mirmillones, Thracians with falchion and buckler, Andabatae blindfolded by their huge bronze helmets, Essedarii in their chariots, Retiarii with net and trident, and Secutores in their bronze armour, equipped with sword and shield. Round the arena they marched, and out by the portal at the other end, halting below the Emperor's box to utter in deep-throated chorus their ominous greeting—"Hail, Caesar! we who are about to die salute thee!"

The gladiators were of two classes—the one composed of

slaves, captives and condemned criminals, who were forced to fight, the other of men who had embraced the profession of their own free will. Even female gladiators were not infrequent, until they were prohibited in the reign of Severus in consequence of a tumult. Gradually, however, men of all ranks—even senators and knights—took to appearing in the arena, and the Emperor Commodus not only found it consonant with the Imperial dignity to fight as a secutor on 735 several occasions, but even insisted on being paid about £8,000 for each appearance!

After the victory of Christianity successive emperors endeavoured to discourage the public passion for these brutal exhibitions, but in vain. St. Augustine tells of one of his friends who, being forced to attend the games, resolved to guard against their horrible fascination by keeping his eyes closed, but who, startled into opening them by a sudden outcry, was unable from that moment to avert his gaze. In 404, however, a monk named Telemachus, horrified by the spectacle, rushed into the arena and tried to wrench the weapons from the hands of the combatants. He was instantly stoned to death by the infuriated populace, but his heroic action had the result he desired, for the Emperor Honorius not long afterwards issued an edict prohibiting the gladiatorial combats for ever.

Equally popular were the wild-beast hunts, or *venationes*. The number of animals butchered in these entertainments is truly astounding. Five thousand were slaughtered in a single day during the inauguration of the amphitheatre by Titus: at the triumphal games which followed Trajan's conquest of Dacia the total reached 11,000! In A.D. 249, the Emperor Philip—an Arab by birth, and consequently, so Gibbon sarcastically remarks, a robber by profession —celebrated the 1,000th anniversary of the foundation of

Rome, with games in which a battle was fought between 1,000 pairs of gladiators, and thirty elephants were slain, besides hundreds of other animals, including a hippopotamus and a rhinoceros. Martial, on an earlier occasion, describes a rhinoceros tossing a wild bull, and mentions a bear as sticking fast in the blood-soaked sand. At the triumph of Probus in A.D. 281, 100 of the finest breed of Numidian lions were simultaneously released into the arena, their tremendous roars seeming to shake the huge building to its foundations. So great, indeed, was the total of slaughtered animals on this occasion, and so devoid of all pretence at real sport, that even the brutalized Roman mob was rather disgusted than entertained.

As may well be imagined, the organization required to procure such a supply of wild animals was elaborate and costly in the extreme. Its extensive offices were to be found in four out of the fourteen regions of the city: and one's thoughts transfer themselves easily from these to picture the stations on the Red Sea, in Syria, and in Africa: the long caravans winding their way across the sun-baked deserts, or through the steamy heart of the tropical forests; the ships with their sullen, snarling captives rolling home across the sea to Ostia. A regular menagerie was maintained near the prætorian camp, in the vicinity of the modern Porta Pia, from which the animals were transferred, prior to the games, to the substructures of the temple of Claudius, overlooking the Colosseum on the south-west.

Thence, by a subterranean passage still visible, the cages were wheeled into position below the arena, where one may still look down upon the labyrinth of cells and passages, which also contained the elaborate stage machinery. With the decay of the Empire, the *venationes* naturally became fewer and less extravagant, until the occasional slaughter of a

few bulls, stags or even horses was all that could be provided to appease Rome's insatiable thirst for blood. In the sixth century even these pitiful parodies of past magnificence faltered for ever to an end.

In the Middle Ages the deserted amphitheatre became the property of the powerful family of the Frangipani, who made it a part of their great fortress, which comprised the Arches of Constantine and Titus, and extended over half the Palatine hill. In 1312, Henry VII of Luxembourg, whose coronation as Emperor in St. Peter's the Frangipani had helped to frustrate, revenged himself by presenting the Colosseum to the people of Rome. For a brief moment the grim traditions of the Colosseum appeared to have been revived, when in 1328 a most sanguinary bull-fight took place there in which nine bulls were slain, at a cost of eighteen young nobles killed and nine others injured. In 1386, the municipality handed over a third of the building to the Compagnia del Salvatore ad Sancta Sanctorum—a gift still recorded by a small marble bas-relief of the bust of Christ between two lighted tapers on one of the arches facing the Meta Sudans.

During the sixteenth century the Colosseum was a favourite resort of wizards and necromancers, and Benvenuto Cellini describes his own terrifying experiences there with a Sicilian priest, at whose invocations "there appeared many legions of spirits, so that the Colosseum was full of them," and in fact he and his companions were frightened nearly out of their wits. In 1522, during an outbreak of pestilence, a Greek charlatan named Demetrius paraded the streets of Rome with a bull which he professed to have tamed by spells, and which he then sacrificed in the Colosseum to appease the evil spirits afflicting the city—a striking instance of the paganism inherent in the Roman populace. The Colosseum was also utilized for performances of

Passion-plays at this time: a curious picture of Jerusalem, painted in one of the arches of the western entrance, is a survival of these representations.

Pope Sixtus V, a great pontiff, a great ruler, and a great builder, but with little reverence for antiquity, was dissuaded only with the utmost difficulty from pulling down the vast ruin to make a direct road to the Lateran. Benedict XIV finally consecrated it to the memory of the martyrs who had suffered there, and in the nineteenth century various popes contributed liberally to save the monument from total collapse by the erection of the huge brick buttresses which are to be seen there to-day.

It was not only wizards and warlocks who found the Colosseum a congenial haunt. The arches and galleries of the enormous ruin, densely covered with undergrowth and flowering thickets until 1871, provided admirable shelter for gentry still less desirable, and less than 100 years ago visitors who went to view the amphitheatre by moonlight—which no one should omit to do—ran no small risk of being robbed or murdered or carried off by brigands for ransom. Indeed, it is only a few years ago that the police discovered in the subterranean recesses of the building the well-stocked hiding-place of a gang of thieves which they had long been endeavouring to run to earth.

Besides the numerous inscriptions—fragmentary and otherwise—within the confines of the building, there is an interesting, if later, *graffito* to be seen low down on the wall of one of the inner arches on the southern side, which apparently recalls the days when a French army, lent by Napoleon III, supported the tottering throne of Pius IX. It is a drawing in coloured chalks of a dragoon's helmet above two crossed lances, with the gasconading legend beneath,

"Soit à pied, soit à cheval,
Mon honneur est sans égal."

This characteristic record, commemorating, as it appears to do, both the Temporal Power and the Second Empire, deserves to be preserved with greater care than it receives at present.

Wizards and wild beasts, bull-fighters and brigands, Roman emperors and French dragoons, Christian martyrs and medieval barons, gladiators and popes, Childe Harold's Pilgrimage and Cook's Tours—can there be anywhere a parallel to so fantastic a medley? Even the will-o'-the-wisp glamour of buried treasure is not wanting—buried by the Frangipani, or even by the Visigoths! In 1864–5, a Signor Testa produced an ancient manuscript, in which it was stated that a vast treasure lay buried on the northward side of the Colosseum within a few feet of the walls. With the Pope's permission, digging was continued to a considerable depth, but alas, beyond the discovery of a bed of concrete, apparently of great thickness, on which the foundations of the Colosseum rest, the ardour of pursuing remained, as usual, the only prize.

NOTE.—The church of S. Sebastianello al Palatino, where St. Sebastian is supposed to have suffered martyrdom, was long believed to contain the remains of the Papessa Giovanna, or Pope Joan. This apocryphal pontiff, a strange invention of the Middle Ages, was supposed to have succeeded Leo IV in 855. Having assumed male disguise in order to accompany a monk with whom she was in love, she entered the priesthood after his death, and eventually became Pope under the title of John VIII. An intrigue with a palace attendant ended in her giving birth to a child near S. Clemente during a Papal procession, upon which the horrified populace fell upon her and killed her. The legend may have developed from an ancient statue of Juno and the infant Hercules—now in the Museo Chiaramonti of the Vatican—which, there is reason for believing, stood near S. Clemente until removed to the Quirinal by Sixtus V.

CHAPTER VI

THE FORA OF THE EMPERORS

BY the end of the Republic the old Forum Romanum was no longer solely sufficient for Rome's needs, and other fora were gradually and successively constructed to the north of it. It will probably be some time before those of Julius Caesar and of Vespasian can be liberated from the congeries of streets and buildings under which they are now buried. On the other hand, the work on the Forum of Augustus is practically complete; a great part of the Forum of Trajan has already been excavated; and it may be that, before this book is published, some advance will also have been made with the excavation of the Forum Transitorium of Domitian and Nerva. Thus from the Piazza Magnanapoli to the foot of the Via Cavour will extend an unbroken sweep of monumental remains, which for grandeur and historic interest are unrivalled even in Rome.

In 42 B.C., during the battle of Philippi, Augustus had vowed, in the event of victory, to commemorate the chastisement of Caesar's murderers by dedicating a temple to Mars the Avenger. As a precinct for the sacred shrine he laid out a new and magnificent Forum. To obtain the necessary area was both difficult and costly, for the neighbourhood, then as now, was densely crowded, and the limpet-like tenacity of some of the inhabitants resulted in a certain irregularity in the plan, which his architect showed great skill in concealing.

As a protection against the fires which so frequently ravaged the poorer parts of the city, a huge wall of hard volcanic stone, nearly 100 feet in height, was built, so as completely to isolate the Forum area from the squalid quarter on the north and east. In the centre of this wall rose the temple, the wall curving round to right and left in two great hemicycles: somewhat in the same way, as has been pointed out, that St. Peter's and the piazza are enclosed within the great hemicycles of Bernini's colonnade. On the right of the temple a massive archway gave access to the Subura: it is known as the Arco de' Pantani from the swampy nature of the neighbourhood in the Middle Ages.

The entrance to the Forum on the other side of the temple, which consisted of three smaller gateways, was set considerably farther back owing to the irregularity of the area, and was therefore masked by another large arch in front of it, corresponding to the Arco de' Pantani. Adjoining this arch is a rectangular space, which seems to have been a *heroon*, i.e. a shrine of some deified personage—probably of Julius Caesar, whose sword was preserved in the temple as a relic. The marks of the feet of a colossal statue are still visible on the pedestal projecting from the wall, which was decorated with pilasters, and faced with coloured marbles; part of the hand of the statue has also been found, made hollow to lessen the immense weight. Tiberius later added two triumphal arches to the Forum, one on each side of the pronaos of the temple.

The two large hemicycles were slightly raised above the rest of the Forum, and were further separated by colonnades. The large niches in the semicircular walls were intended by Augustus to be reserved for statues of generals who had won fresh provinces for the Empire or otherwise rendered distinguished service to the State. This lofty

conception of the Forum as a kind of national Valhalla was, however, soon lost sight of by his successors, who awarded statues to the most undistinguished persons. Claudius gave a statue to a youth who had done nothing more heroic than become engaged to his daughter, while Nero erected statues to the men who had turned "King's evidence" concerning the alleged conspiracy of Piso. According to the younger Pliny, Domitian gave the honour of a statue to men who not only had never been in the army, but had never even heard a bugle-call except on the stage!

The great temple was considered by Pliny as one of the three most beautiful buildings in the world—the others being the basilica Aemilia and Vespasian's temple of Peace. Three magnificent columns beside the Arco de' Pantani still support part of the roof of the exterior colonnade. The perfection of the workmanship is shown even more clearly by the exquisite precision with which the massive blocks of the *podium* are fitted together despite the fact that they were intended to be completely hidden by a facing of marble slabs, some fragments of which are still in place.

The interior of the cella must have been rather like the entrance to the court of the Farnese palace—a row of great columns on each side, with large niches for statues in the intercolumniations. Within it stood the two great cult statues of Venus and Mars. The huge beams of the roof had been specially brought from the Tyrol, and had been cut on the hottest days of the year: this, it was believed, rendering them practically indestructible.

The Forum of Augustus played a highly important part in Roman life. Youthful members of the Imperial family came there to assume the toga of manhood: the Senate assembled there whenever it was necessary to issue a formal declaration of war: provincial governors received their

appointments in it: law-courts sat there, over which the emperors often personally presided. The temple was a favourite place with people who wanted to deposit money for safe keeping, but its credit was badly shaken about the end of the first century by a daring burglary, when even the golden helmet of Mars was stolen.

Not the least interesting of the temple's associations is its connection with the Salii, the priests of Mars, who on each New Year's Day (March 1) went in strange procession through the streets, leaping and dancing, chanting hymns so ancient as to be no longer intelligible, and wildly clashing the sacred shields and spears of the god. The festival ended with a banquet in the Forum of Augustus. The savoury odours of the feast—and *dapes Saliares* were proverbial for their luxury—so appealed to Claudius on one occasion that, hurriedly adjourning the case he was trying, he rushed from the court, and invited himself to dinner with the priests!

The temple must have been already in ruins in the ninth century, when Basilian monks took possession of it, and excavated an ossuary in the *podium*. In the thirteenth century the whole Forum became the property of the Knights of Rhodes, who used some of the ancient buildings for their palace. A square pillared hall—originally an impluvium—may possibly have formed part of the quarters of the Salii. The graceful Gothic window and splendid Renaissance loggia date from a restoration of the palace in 1465 by Cardinal Barbo, nephew of Paul II.

Between the Forum of Augustus and that of Vespasian Domitian began a new Forum—called Transitorium because connecting the other two. It was completed by his successor, Nerva, together with a temple which Domitian had dedicated to his patron goddess, Minerva. All that is at

present visible is a single intercolumniation of the enclosing wall of the Forum, generally known as *Le Colonnacce*. The figure of Minerva above the architrave is surrounded by reliefs of women, representing, apparently, various myths connected with the goddess.

The Forum Transitorium was comparatively small, and was in fact more like a street monumentally treated than a Forum proper. It was, however, of considerable importance, not only as linking up two other and larger fora, but because through it passed one of the principal thoroughfares of the city, the Argiletum, connecting the old Forum Romanum with the Subura. The Argiletum was largely occupied by booksellers and publishers, such as the Sosii Brothers, who published the poems of Horace, and the firm of Atrectus and Secundus, who held the copyright of Martial's Epigrams. No doubt Horace was on his way to his publishers when he was pounced on by his famous bore. Even in the Middle Ages the site retained a certain importance. Though by that time chiefly inhabited by butchers and slaughterers, through the ancient Forum passed the Via Papalis, by which the popes went in procession from St. Peter's to the Lateran. Close by, about 1200, Count Riccardo de' Conti, brother of the great Innocent III, erected the huge tower still called by his name, though now a mere rookery. It was originally at least twice its present height, and Petrarch even called it the world's nonesuch—*turris illa toto orbe unica*.

But by far the most magnificent of all the Imperial Fora, and perhaps the greatest architectural achievement of the ancient world, was the Forum Ulpium, built for Trajan between 112 and 114 by Apollodorus of Damascus, the most celebrated architect of the age. To obtain the necessary space, the busy shopping quarter between the

The Market of Trajan in the 16th. Century.

Capitol and the Quirinal was evacuated and demolished, and a spur of the Quirinal, apparently, cut away, to a total altitude—108 feet—afterwards represented by the great column. Such is, probably, the best interpretation of the inscription on the base. It was formerly thought to mean that a ridge connecting the two hills had been removed, but the discovery of an earlier street *below* the column shows that no such ridge existed.

The plan of the Forum was itself a novelty. By a triumphal arch near the little chapel of S. Urbano in the Via Alessandrina one passed into a vast square, enclosed on three sides by statues and porticoes, and containing in its midst a colossal equestrian statue of the Emperor. Behind the porticoes on the east and west extended grand hemicycles, each flanked by two smaller ones: the eastern hemicycle has now been fully excavated, revealing its splendid pavement of coloured marbles and the line of its enclosing wall, which was pierced by an arch. The fourth side of the square was closed by steps leading to a majestic basilica, with enormous apses at each end. The central portion of this building, about half its total area, was excavated by the French in 1812, and is now populated by a forlorn army of cats. Only the pedestals of the huge granite columns belong to the basilica: the original columns were alternately of granite and costly coloured marbles, while the lofty roof was covered with gilt-bronze tiles.

Behind the basilica was a small court, almost exactly represented by the apsidal termination of the excavated area. It was enclosed, east and west, by two libraries of Greek and Latin literature, while in the centre stood the magnificent Column. Lastly, beyond the court of the libraries, Hadrian added a great temple dedicated to the divinity of Trajan, to which, perhaps, belong the immense fragments

of columns and capitals between the Column and the end of the excavations.

The great Column was surmounted by a gilt-bronze statue of Trajan, whose ashes, enclosed in a golden urn, were subsequently placed within the pedestal. The loop-holes of the spiral stair inside the Column are cut with such utter disregard for the wonderful reliefs that it is supposed that both stair and sepulchral chamber were decided on after the frieze design was already completed, though, naturally, before the actual erection of the Column.

The grand series of reliefs was intended to be seen, not only from the ground, but from the two-storied porticoes of the basilica and the two libraries. They recount, in the most vivid and dramatic fashion, the history of Trajan's two great campaigns against the Dacians. The form of the Column, resembling a papyrus scroll, and its position between the libraries, suggests that it was intended as a monumental *édition de luxe* of Trajan's own history of his wars. Imposing as it still is, it must have been infinitely more so when brilliantly coloured in natural hues from top to bottom, like a medieval manuscript, and even, it would seem, inlaid here and there with metal, the better to suggest the flashing of the armour and the glint of sunlight on shield and spear.

The real subject of the reliefs, however, is not merely the incidents of the war, but the military grandeur of the Empire, and the unflagging courage and chivalry of the Roman soldier against the ferocity and cruelty of his barbarian foes. This conception is personified in the great Emperor himself: his wisdom, piety and magnanimity form the keynote, as it were, of the entire series, that winds ever upwards to culminate in the colossal image on the summit of the Column. From end to end of the great Forum the same theme was repeated, from the triumphal quadriga above

the entrance archway to the final apotheosis in the great temple.

The magnificence of the Forum Ulpium, crowded with superb works of art, deeply impressed the Emperor Constantius II when he visited Rome for the first time in 356. After gazing about him speechlessly for some time, he at last declared that he would order an equestrian statue like Trajan's to be made for Constantinople. "Ah, sire," smiled the young Prince Hormisdas of Persia, who was in his suite, "to possess such a horse Your Majesty must first provide him with a stable like this!"

It was in this Forum that Hadrian, in 118, ordered the burning of documents representing arrears of taxes to the tune of nearly seven and a half million sterling. Here, too, Marcus Aurelius auctioned the Crown valuables —even the Imperial robes—to raise funds for the Marcomannic war. Slaves were also manumitted in the Forum: probably in the basilica, one of whose *exedrae* was called "Libertatis."

The great curving edifice of brick which now looks down so imposingly on the eastern hemicycle was, until recently, entirely hidden by a row of modern houses, the lower portion being completely buried under a deep deposit of earth and refuse. It belongs, not to the Forum itself, but to the splendid market designed by Apollodorus to replace the old shopping quarter which the new Forum had swept away. Between it and the Forum runs a street, the pavement of which is in fairly good preservation.

From the ground-floor shops, with their doorways of travertine and small square windows above, a stair leads to the conjunction of two long corridors, one of which is now practically in darkness owing to the Palazzo Roccagiovane being built in front of it. Both corridors contain

shops, lighted, or originally lighted, by large windows in the exterior wall. More stairs—singularly steep like nearly all Roman staircases—lead to a broad terrace overlooking the Forum, and, behind the terrace, a street with shops on both sides, which was known in the Middle Ages as the Via Biberatica—perhaps a corruption of "Viveratica," or "Victuallers' Street."

Part of the great market is still—temporarily—occupied by a school, while the other was, until recently, a barracks. Although Renaissance drawings showed a large edifice on the site, no one had suspected that the commonplace structure condemned to demolition in 1926 was actually a complete monumental building of the reign of Trajan. Stripped of the disfigurements of later times, the grand market-hall, with its galleries and stairways, its rows of shops and lofty vaulted ceiling, constitutes one of the most remarkable surprises that has ravished Roman archæologists for years.

How vividly one can picture the merchants squatting among their wares, as in the architect's own city of Damascus —a tempting variety heaped on benches before each door! Wonderful Eastern rugs aglow with colour, bowls of bronze or hammered copper inwrought fantastically with silver, cunningly carved ivories, charms of jade or crystal, perfumes, subtle and exotic—"cassia, sandal-buds and stripes Of labdanum, and aloe-balls"—how clearly the picture rises before one's eyes! How the great vault seems to ring with chatter and shrill cries, and the ample gallery to fill with a shifting, eddying crowd in every variety of costume and class, from the ragged thief, furtively alert for unconsidered trifles, to the perfumed dandy, his hands heavy with rings, languidly seeking a present for his mistress!

About the beginning of the thirteenth century the Conti erected a strong tower—the present Torre del Grillo—

at one end of the Via Biberatica, where the remains of a small church have also recently been found, while at the other arose the huge Torre delle Milizie, the most imposing monument of the Middle Ages in Rome. In 1299 Count Pietro de' Caetani, nephew of Boniface VIII, converted a large part of the market into a castle, with the Milizie for a keep—destined, a few years later, to be the headquarters of Henry of Luxembourg in his unsuccessful efforts to cut his way to his coronation in St. Peter's.

Concerning the building of the castle, Adinolfi has preserved a characteristic anecdote. Some of the cardinals one day paid a visit to the works, and were received by the Count, who lamented the expense to which he was being put. The Cardinal of S. Sabina murmured some vague offer of assistance, and found himself, to his unspeakable dismay, promptly taken *au pied de la lettre*. A notary was at once summoned, and the unfortunate cardinal escaped only after signing away landed property near Viterbo to the value of 12,000 gold florins!

CHAPTER VII

ON THE CAELIAN HILL

BEYOND the Arch of Constantine, and the remains of the great platform where the gardens of the Passionist monks of SS. Giovanni e Paolo have replaced the magnificent temple of Claudius, the church and monastery of St. Gregory the Great overlook the tree-lined avenue that was once the Via Triumphalis. Some day, it is to be hoped, they will excavate below the church, and thus bring to light the remains of the palace of the Anicii, where the founder of the medieval Papacy was born about the year 540. With all the worldly advantages that vast wealth and noble birth can give, Gregory suddenly astounded Rome by becoming a monk, and turning his ancestral palace into a monastery of Benedictines. For English folk the place holds a special interest, since it was from this very spot that Gregory despatched St. Augustine and his fellow-monks to the conversion of pagan Britain.

The church was rebuilt in the eighth century, and though considerably altered in later times still contrives to remind us of its antiquity. It is one of the few churches in Rome that still retain their atria, and here is another link with England in the tomb of Sir Edward Carne, who came to Rome with Cranmer in 1530 to lay before Clement VII the difficult question of Henry VIII's divorce from Catharine of Aragon. In later years he became envoy to the Papal court, and died at Rome in 1561.

On the left side of the portico the tomb of a certain

Canon Guidiccioni, who died in 1643, presents us with one of those ironies which one finds only in Rome. The tomb was originally made for a charming lady named Imperia, the darling of the great banker, Agostino Chigi, and of half Rome besides. Her house in the Banchi was so crammed with costly and beautiful objects that the Spanish ambassador on one occasion was forced to spit in the face of her negro servant for lack of any other place to do it in! A strange occupant, no doubt, for the home of St. Gregory: stranger still that the last couch of a light-of-love should become that of a minor canon: but strangest of all the mingled parsimony and priggishness of those who, by appropriating her tomb, could thus congratulate themselves on saving expense and removing a scandal!

The chapel of St. Gregory contains a fine fifteenth-century altar by Luigi Capponi, on which is an admirable predella of uncertain authorship. Adjoining the chapel is the tiny cell in which the Pope is said to have slept, with a stone slab for sole couch. The ancient marble seat, traditionally declared to be his, and doubtless used in the Middle Ages as an episcopal throne, originally accommodated, if Lanciani's hypothesis is correct, some member of the senatorial order when watching the games in the Colosseum. In the Salviati chapel on the left of the church, facing a beautiful tabernacle by Andrea Bregno, is a figure of the Madonna which may even be contemporary with St. Gregory himself: the wall on which it is painted is older than the church, and has a different orientation.

To the left of the church three picturesque chapels—medieval under their modern dress—face a cypress-dotted sward that was once the cemetery of the monks. A sombre fragment of the so-called Servian wall reminds us that on this same Caelian hill Servius is said to have built his new

palace. Of the three chapels, the first contains a beautiful Concert of Angels by Guido Reni. The chapel of St. Andrew, finely frescoed by Domenichino, is possibly the original oratory of the great Pope, while in the ancient Triclinium is a huge marble table, at which Gregory is said to have daily entertained twelve beggars in honour of the Twelve Apostles; on one occasion, says a beautiful legend, the meal was shared by a thirteenth Guest, visible to none but Gregory himself.

From S. Gregorio one ascends the ancient Clivus Scauri, spanned by ancient brick arches, to the picturesque little piazza before the church of St. John and St. Paul. On the right of the street are the remains of a library founded by Pope Agapitus about 535, on the eve of the long war with Byzantium which terminated in the fall of the Gothic kingdom established in Italy by the great Theodoric. A careful scrutiny of the church wall on the left reveals the fact that it is really the façade of the house said to have been inhabited by the two saints—not the Apostles, but two Roman officers who are supposed to have been put to death for their faith under Julian.

Arrived at the piazza we again come in touch with England, for the church porch, with its quaint lions on either side of the doorway, and its beautiful bell-tower—based, as on a rock, on part of the foundations of the temple of Claudius—are a legacy of the only English Pope, Adrian IV, who, as a boy, had begged his bread from the monks of St. Albans. The fascinating little gallery running round the exterior of the apse is also due to his restoration of the church.

The house of the two saints is profoundly interesting. It was built at least as early as the second century, at which time, probably, was painted the large fresco on the wall of

Church of SS. John and Paul and the Clivus Scauri in the 17th Century.

the first room one enters after descending the stairs. It is all the more fascinating, perhaps, because the subject is still something of a mystery. A beautiful female figure, reclining, half nude, upon an island, extends her hand to a muscular youth, while dolphins play around and little love-gods guide their shallops over a halcyon sea. Some have seen in the picture the meeting of Thetis and Dionysus, others a symbol of the union between Ostia and Portus in the reign of Trajan. According to Mrs. Strong, it represents the "Sacred Spring," "the reawakening of land and water after their long winter sleep," the two principal figures being the deities of fertility, Venus and Dionysus. Readers of Pater will recall the exquisite description of the spring festival in "Marius the Epicurean."

The Christians who later occupied the house had covered this painting with whitewash, from which it was rescued only in 1909. The so-called triclinium is adorned with a graceful frieze of genii supporting long swags of fruit and flowers, with peacocks and other birds between, which, being purely ornamental, was left uninjured. In other rooms the decoration is more unmistakably Christian, especially in the so-called tablinum, with its impressive praying figure, perhaps representing the soul. Of these later paintings the most interesting is the scene where three blindfolded figures kneel in preparation for the headsman's stroke—the earliest known representation of a martyrdom. The three martyrs are SS. Crispus, Crispinianus and Benedetta, whose remains could be worshipped through the grating, or *fenestrella confessionis*.

At the top of the hill the road passes under a simple travertine arch built by the consuls Dolabella and Silanus a few years before the beginning of the present era, and debouches into the little piazza of the Navicella: so called

from a small marble ship, a sixteenth-century copy of an original which was probably set up as an *ex-voto* in ancient times by foreign troops quartered in the vicinity. Above the Romanesque doorway of the former church of S. Tommaso in Formis is a mosaic tondo by Jacopo Cosmati. The two slaves, black and white, on either side of the enthroned Saviour, recall the foundation in 1198 of the Trinitarian Order, whose primary object was the rescue of prisoners.

The very ancient church of S. Maria in Domnica still preserves the mosaics with which the apse was adorned about 817 by Paschal I, a vigorous opponent of the Iconoclasts. Despite the obvious crudities of the work, there is a deep impressiveness in the great figure of the Mother of God, holding her Son upon her knees, and adored by an angelic host, while the Pope kneels to kiss her feet. Equally fine is the composition of the arch, where Christ sits in majesty, with the rainbow for his footstool, while angels and apostles reverently approach him over the meadows of Paradise, strewn with the white flowers of faith and the red flowers of love.

In the beautiful Villa Celimontana, just beyond the church, legend places the mystic assignations of Numa with the nymph Egeria: a somewhat more romantic association, at least, than the police-barracks which occupied the site of the villa in Imperial times! Beyond the old brick wall opposite the entrance to the villa is the singular church of S. Stefano Rotondo, the largest round church in existence, though it was still larger before the alterations of the fifteenth century. It is built on Roman foundations, possibly of a large market hall (*macellum magnum*) of Nero's day, or, according to another theory, of a circular dining-room of the Golden House.

To the left of the present entrance is a marble throne,

signed by "Magister Johannes" (Giovanni Cosmati?)—an interesting medieval imitation of classical art. The original entrance was converted, perhaps in the seventh century, into a little chapel dedicated to SS. Primus and Felicianus, who stand on either side of a jewelled cross surmounted by the bust of Christ—a curious design, showing how long-enduring was the repugnance to any actual representation of the Crucifixion. No such reticence, unfortunately, is shown on the walls of the church itself, where cinquecentist realism has displayed with morbid relish the most revolting details of martyrdom.

Following the Via Celimontana, one soon comes in sight of S. Clemente, in some ways the most interesting church in all Rome, where the excavations carried on since 1857 have revealed a unique series of historical strata extending over a period of at least twelve hundred years. We have thus, one above another, the massive walls of what may have been the later Republican mint of the second century B.C.; the remains of the first-century house actually occupied by St. Clement, the third successor of St. Peter, and believed to have been personally ordained by him; the Mithraic chapel and school of initiation into which the house was converted in the second or third century; the fourth-century basilica destroyed by the Norman sack of 1084; and lastly the present basilica, completed by 1128, which was erected above the ruins of the earlier church.

A picturesque porch of the twelfth century precedes a quadro-porticoed atrium, still containing its fountain, or *cantharus*, where worshippers might purify themselves before entering the church. The interior of the church is full of beauty, and one's eyes roam eagerly from one thing to another—the rich Cosmatesque pavement, the antique columns, differing alike in style and material, and the

beautiful *schola cantorum* with its Easter candlestick, its two ambones, and its unique lectern. All these were saved from the ruins when they rebuilt the basilica at the end of the eleventh century. In the temple-shaped ciborium one may still see part of the chain from which hung the golden dove containing the Sacrament, and the rods and rings for the veils of the altar. The anchor in the pediment recalls the martyrdom of St. Clement, who was drowned in the Black Sea, with an anchor fastened about his neck.

But the most impressive feature of the church is the wonderful mosaic which adorns the tribune. In the centre of the arch the bust of Christ, in the attitude of benediction, is flanked by the symbols of the Four Evangelists. In the spandrels St. Peter and St. Paul instruct respectively St. Clement and St. Laurence, while Jeremiah and Isaiah display appropriate inscriptions below. At the bases of the arch the cities of Bethlehem and Jerusalem symbolize both the birth and death of Christ, and the twin Churches of the Jews and the Gentiles—*ecclesia ex gentibus* and *ecclesia ex circumcisione*.

Besides the birds and winged genii that disport themselves among the wonderful acanthus-scrolls adorning the apse, one perceives small human figures in costumes of the eleventh century, perhaps representing those who had contributed to the cost of the work. With these are the four great Doctors of the Church, St. Augustine and St. Jerome on the left, and St. Gregory and St. Ambrose on the right. Behind St. Ambrose is a caged bird, a rare symbol of the Incarnation, which is repeated in the mosaics of S. Maria in Trastevere, made a few years later.

The entire design is dominated by the great Crucifix, on which perch twelve doves, representing the Apostles. Above it are the opening heavens—a glory of many-hued radiance

—from which the hand of God emerges, grasping a wreath of victory, while on either side of the Cross the Virgin and St. John intercede for humanity. Amid the mass of acanthus from which the Cross springs a tiny hart devours an enormous serpent (baptism abolishing original sin), while two stags—an allusion to Psalm xlii. 1—drink of the living water of the four Mystic Rivers (the Gospels). To left and right are quaint groups where small figures are tending chickens, sheep and goats; perhaps emblematic of Christian pastorship.

To a large extent, the design and even the materials of this mosaic were taken from the apse of the fourth-century church. Some of the motives, such as the Intercession and the four Mystic Rivers, are, as Wilpert has shown,[1] borrowed from the mosaics of the Lateran, while the great scrolls probably derive their descent eventually from the Altar of Peace erected by Augustus in 10 B.C. The great Cross is furthermore a memorial of the taking of Jerusalem by the Crusaders in 1099 under the leadership of Godfrey de Bouillon. Paschal II, who was elected at S. Clemente in the same year, commemorated the rescue of the Holy Sepulchre by placing within the mosaic crucifix a small fragment of the True Cross, together with relics of St. James and of St. Ignatius, the martyred bishop of Antioch, traditionally identified with the child whom Jesus took in his arms (Mark ix. 36).

The Renaissance monuments of the church, even the frescoes of Masolino, evoke, by comparison, an interest comparatively mild. Not so, however, the frescoes of the lower church, which have a spell entirely their own. The translation of St. Clement's relics, painted for "Maria the butcher's wife" (*Maria macellaria*), the story of the child

[1] *La Decorazione Costantiniana della Basilica Lateranense,* Riv. di Archeol. Christiana, 1921, Nos. 1 and 2.

restored safely to his sorrowing mother after being lost for a whole year in the enchanted church under the sea, the legend of St. Alexius—the humble mendicant who only on his death-bed reveals himself to his parents and forsaken bride—all these are depicted with the charm and vivacity of a fairy-tale.

The donors of these last two series of paintings were a certain Beno de Rapiza [1] and his beautiful wife, the Lady Maria (*Domna Maria*), whose best-preserved portraits are seen just below the submarine church. To them, too, is due the scene of St. Clement celebrating Mass, which abounds in interesting details, besides amusingly illustrating the story of the patrician Sisinius, a courtier of Nerva. For mocking at the devotion of his Christian wife, Theodora—whose graceful figure is on the right of the altar—he is struck blind, and has to be led away by an attendant. In the lower panel, he and his servants are seen furiously dragging a heavy column about under the deluded impression that it is the Saint himself, while the enraged nobleman yells, "Pull, you whoresons!" and "Get behind with a crowbar, Carvoncellus!" These inscriptions are probably the earliest known examples of the transition between Latin and modern Italian.

By far the finest painting in the lower church, however, is that which is now generally regarded as the earliest known representation of the Assumption. For composition, drawing, and imaginative power of expression this picture, which cannot be later than the ninth century, is probably unsurpassed by any painting of the next four hundred years. A subordinate interest is afforded by the contemporary portrait (on the left) of Leo IV, the builder of the Leonine City.

The Mithraeum at S. Clemente, which, like all Mithraic

[1] The name is frequently mentioned in the registers of the monastery of Farfa about the beginning of the eleventh century.

shrines, is in the form of a cave, is exceptionally well preserved—its vaulted ceiling, encrusted with mosaic and pierced by *luminaria*, its benches for the worshippers to recline on during the mystic communion-feast, and its square receptacle for the lustral water. The altar, however, should probably be in the little atrium outside the shrine, where in fact it was found, and where also is a half-column to which, perhaps, was tethered the sacrificial bull. Besides the inevitable relief of Mithras slaying the sacred bull of Ormazd, the sky-god, while a serpent (the Earth) laps the life-giving blood, and a scorpion (the emissary of the Evil Power, Ahriman) strives to vitiate the sacrifice, it bears the emblems of the Sun and Moon, two (originally four) heads representing the seasons, two figures of torch-bearers (morning and evening), and the dedication by Cneius Arrius Claudianus, the *Pater* or head of the community.

Interesting also are the other sculptures found here—a head of Apollo (with whom Mithras was identified); a small figure of the infant Mithras emerging from a rock (probably symbolizing the sun rising behind the mountains); and a unique statuette of one of the shepherds who adored the god at his birth. The resemblances between Mithraism and Christianity are numerous and remarkable. Its widespread popularity made it one of Christianity's most formidable opponents, and indeed in the third century it seemed for a time destined to become the universal religion of the Empire.

With its outer and inner courtyard, frowning walls, and massive gateway tower, the near-by monastery of the SS. Quattro Coronati is a veritable fortress, in which the placid nuns who now inhabit it seem oddly out of place. Under its gloomy archway Charles of Anjou alighted in 1267 before beginning his campaign against Manfred: the Infante Enriques of Castile dwelt here as the representative of the youthful

Conradin, last and most luckless of the Hohenstaufen: in 1312 it was occupied by Count Baldwin of Trier, brother of Henry VII of Luxembourg. In the sixteenth century it was the titular church of Cardinal Prince Enriques of Portugal, who gave the church its fine wooden ceiling, and with whom, senile and half-insane, the Aviz dynasty guttered into extinction.

Who the "Four Holy Crowned Ones" may be is a matter of considerable obscurity: the number would really seem to be thirteen, including five sculptors put to death by Diocletian for refusing to make an image of Aesculapius. After the destruction in 1084 of the original fourth-century church, it was rebuilt by Paschal II on a smaller scale, and columns and arches of the old nave may be seen embedded in the walls of the inner court. The church still retains its ancient *matronea* or galleries for the feminine members of the congregation. The exquisite cloister breathes an atmosphere of smiling serenity: the fountain-basin in the centre is the ancient cantharus, while in the left walk is a small chapel of the reign of Leo IV.

On the right of the former narthex, in the first court, is the Chapel of St. Sylvester, now assigned to the Roman marble-cutters and stone-masons. It is decorated with a most extraordinary and amusing series of thirteenth-century frescoes, representing the legendary history of St. Sylvester and the Emperor Constantine. In the lunette above the original entrance is the Last Judgement, where an angel is quite literally rolling up the heavens like a scroll! The painter is obviously unaffected by the new vitality of contemporary Roman art, represented especially by Cavallini. According to Muñoz, he had probably learned his art, such as it is, in some south Italian school of Benedictine miniaturists, where Byzantine influences were still strongly predominant.

CHAPTER VIII

THE STORY OF THE LATERAN

FROM the entrance to the SS. Quattro Coronati the road leads straight to the thirteenth-century portico, till recently walled up and forgotten, of the Lateran hospital. Founded by Cardinal Colonna under Innocent III, it may, as Cecchelli has shown, have been built in time to afford a residence to St. Francis of Assisi, when in 1210 he came to Rome, under the Cardinal's protection, to obtain Innocent's sanction for his new order. The adjacent Romanesque portal was added in 1348.

The hospital was largely restored and enlarged after 1464 from the bequest of Eversus, Count of Anguillara, whose arms—a boar's head above two crossed eels—are still conspicuous on the side facing the Piazza S. Giovanni. One of the fiercest and most indomitable of the many robber barons whose ruined towers yet dot the Campagna, Eversus would seem to have bequeathed something of his lawless spirit along with the money. One of the spectacles which greeted Jubilee pilgrims in 1500 was that of the hospital physician dangling by the neck from the battlements of S. Angelo! Besides poisoning those of his patients whom the hospital confessor had discovered to be worth such attention, this enterprising practitioner had formed the habit of prowling the streets with a bow and arrows in the early hours of the morning in order to kill and plunder lonely wayfarers.

The Piazza S. Giovanni—the Campus Lateranus of

classical times—has rung to the chant of pilgrims, the shouts of combatants, the screams of tortured malefactors. Here, in 576, the Gothic army under Totila, admitted by treachery through the Asinarian gate, remained till morning drawn up in battle array, with clashing shields and braying war-horns, while the Greek garrison of the city fled in wild panic. Here, during the Middle Ages, crowds have surged, with yells of fury, round the Papal palace, or knelt in humble awe to receive the Papal benediction. Here Peter the Prefect swung by the hair by order of the angry Otto, and here in meteoric splendour flashed the enigmatic figure of Cola di Rienzi.

More than twenty centuries ago the Romans yearly assembled in the Campus to do battle with rite and incantation against the evil powers that haunted the adjacent Esquiline; and here to this day, on St. John's Eve, they assemble still, by immemorial custom, to eat fried snails —potent against witchcraft—and make as much and as discordant uproar as possible. Grotesque masks, goggle-eyed monsters, move through the laughing throng, where every one carries huge stalks of garlic as a charm against malignant spells. The abrupt contrasts of glare and gloom, the goblin masks, the noise and laughter, and the dark masses of building that look silently down upon it all, are like the confused images of some fantastic dream.

In the centre of the piazza, where in the thirteenth century a strong tower of the Annibaldeschi frowned defiance to Innocent III, is the tallest obelisk in Rome. Fifteen hundred years before the birth of Christ, Thothmes III erected it at Heliopolis before the temple of Ammon. In A.D. 357 Constantius II had it conveyed to Rome and set up in the Circus Maximus. There it remained for nearly thirteen centuries more, till in 1587 Domenico Fontana

found it broken into three pieces, and erected it in front of the Lateran. It is the oldest thing in Rome—older by more than seven hundred years than the traditional foundation of Rome itself. Moses and Herodotus and Alexander the Great, St. Peter and St. Paul, the religious processions of ancient Egypt and the chariot races of Imperial Rome—it has looked down upon them all with the same impassivity with which it looks upon the trams and tourists of to-day.

About A.D. 311 Constantine presented St. Melchiades with the former palace of the Laterani—then Crown property—as the future seat of the Bishops of Rome. Out of this Domus Laterana, which covered an area considerably larger than that of the church and palace to-day, developed in course of time the vast and rambling Patriarchium, the home of the medieval Papacy up to the "Babylonian exile" at Avignon in the fourteenth century. On the return of the Popes to Rome, they preferred to live rather at the Vatican, and the old Lateran palace, thus abandoned, was in a condition of ruinous neglect when, in the sixteenth century, Sixtus V finally pulled most of it down.

All that is left—apart from the church and Baptistery—are the chapel of S. Lorenzo, and the principal tribune of the splendid Triclinium, or banquet hall, built by Leo III shortly before his coronation of Charlemagne in 800. In this same hall took place the coronation banquet of Boniface VIII in 1294, when the kings of Naples and Hungary served the haughty Pope on bended knee: and here in 1312 Henry VII, failing to reach St. Peter's, compelled the protesting cardinals to crown him emperor. Memories such as these could not save the building, but the mosaics of the tribune were another matter. Containing the contemporary portraits both of Leo and Charlemagne, they constitute an almost unique memorial of the great event

which transferred the seat of empire from East to West. The mosaics were, however, almost totally remade in the eighteenth century.

The chapel of S. Lorenzo, on the contrary, now separated by a street from the modern palace, remains unaltered since the thirteenth century, when it was restored and redecorated by Nicholas III. It is almost impossible to gain admittance, but some idea of the beauty of the interior is obtained by peering through the grated window. Its usual name of *Sancta Sanctorum* comes from the multitude of relics contained in it from the earliest times, particularly the celebrated portrait of Christ known as the Acheropita ("made without hands"). Possibly brought to Italy during the Iconoclast persecutions in the sixth century, this portrait is first heard of in 753, when, alarmed by the threats of the Lombards, Stephen III carried it in solemn procession from the Lateran to S. Maria Maggiore.

Up to the sixteenth century it was customary to take the Acheropita from its shrine at midnight on the eve of August 14, and carry it in procession to S. Maria Nova (S. Francesca Romana) and S. Adriano in the Forum, in front of each of which it was exposed for the adoration of the crowd, while its feet were solemnly washed with rose-water. This curious practice seems to have been a Christianized perpetuation of the great pagan festival of Cybele, when the meteoric stone of the goddess was carried along the Appian Way to be washed in the brook Almo.

The famous Scala Santa, or Holy Stair, down which Christ is said to have walked, wearing the scarlet robe and crown of thorns, in the Prætorium of Pilate, is supposed to have been brought to Rome from Jerusalem by St. Helena, the mother of Constantine the Great. Actually, however, nothing is known of it before the twelfth century, and the

intense veneration in which it is now held seems to have developed only about the fifteenth. It may be ascended only on the knees. Beneath small panes of glass, inset in the wooden covering, are what are believed to be drops of blood from the Saviour's lacerated brows. The walls of the lateral stairways are covered with the names of pilgrims, many of them as early as the sixteenth century, when the Stair was removed from the front of the old palace to its present position.

In the modern palace, a fine work by Domenico Fontana, the Treaty of Conciliation between the Papacy and the Italian Government was signed on February 11, 1929. Otherwise it is of little historical interest. It stands approximately on the site of the old Council Hall, or "Hall of the Wolf"—so called because the famous bronze She-wolf,[1] now in the Conservatori, was affixed to the outer wall at least so early as the tenth century. Close by, too, stood the statue of Marcus Aurelius which is now on the Capitol, and which had probably been removed from the once neighbouring palace of Annius Verus, where the Emperor had spent his boyhood.

The church of St. John Lateran—"Mother and Head of all Churches of Rome and of the World"—has been the cathedral of Rome for sixteen hundred years. Con-

[1] According to Carcopino (*La Louve du Capitole*, Paris, 1925), this statue, an Etrusco-Roman masterpiece of the sixth to fifth century B.C., was made to replace an earlier group in wood which commemorated the union of the Latins and Sabines, and represented a Latin and a Sabine drinking, side by side, from the breasts of their common totem. These two small figures of *men* were mistaken in later times for the two *children*, Romulus and Remus, whose actual effigies are attributed to Ant. Pollaiuolo. The animal shows marks of injury by lightning, which renders it probable that it is the Wolf mentioned by Cicero as struck by lightning on the Capitol in 65 B.C.

structed out of one of the great halls of the Domus Laterana as a memorial of the victory of Saxa Rubra, it became known as the Golden Basilica from the magnificent endowments of Constantine, to whom, probably, it owes the four great gilt-bronze columns which now adorn the Chapel of the Sacrament. It was primarily dedicated to the Saviour, but was rededicated some centuries later to the Baptist and the Evangelist. The head of Christ in mosaic, made (or, more probably, restored) by Torriti about 1291, and incorporated in the pediment of the modern façade, still recalls the original dedication.

Thrown down by earthquake in 896, rebuilt eight years later by Sergius III, almost totally destroyed by fire in 1308 and again in 1360, the Lateran church was once more restored in the fifteenth century by Martin V and Eugenius IV. Giacomo della Porta, under Clement VIII, gave their present aspect to the transepts between 1597 and 1601: the north porch and loggia were added by Domenico Fontana for Sixtus V, leaving untouched the fourteenth-century towers of Gregory XI, which recall the return of the Papacy from Avignon. The transformation of the nave was carried out by Borromini under Innocent X (1644–55). In 1732 Alessandro Galilei, a profound admirer of the work of Inigo Jones and Sir Christopher Wren, added the dignified and harmonious façade; and lastly, in 1876, Leo XIII ordered the prolongation of the choir. Yet, despite so long a history of vicissitude and change, the great church has never lost its original form or character, and, as Mgr. Wilpert has recently demonstrated,[1] the very subjects chosen for the decoration

[1] *La Decorazione Costantiniana della Basilica Lateranense,* Riv. di Archeol. Christ., 1921, Nos. 1 and 2. Notice especially the frieze above the great pilasters, where the Constantinian monogram of the ☧, flanked by wreaths and palms, alternates with the figure of a dove

The Lateran Church and Palace from the west in the 17th Century.

of the Constantinian basilica are still more or less faithfully echoed, not only in the mosaics of the apse, but even in the baroque decoration of the great nave.

To describe the history of the Lateran would require a volume to itself. Vandals and Goths and Byzantines, the followers of Ladislaus of Naples, the bloodstained hordes of Bourbon, not to mention the Romans themselves, have stormed and plundered it again and again. Here Martin I was dragged from before the altar by the soldiers of Constans II: here John VIII was murdered with blows of a hammer by his own relations, who had unsuccessfully tried to poison him: here the mouldering corpse of Pope Formosus, torn from its grave to undergo the malignant mockery of a trial, was stripped, mutilated, dragged with savage yells through the streets, and flung into the Tiber: and here the wild retainers of the terrible Senatrix Marozia burst into the palace, cut down John X's brother before his eyes, and haled the Pope himself to his murder in S. Angelo.

The Lateran has witnessed the nameless revelries of John XII and Benedict IX, the election of the great Gregory VII in 1073, and the appalling scenes of fire and massacre in 1084, which left the greater part of the city a heap of ashes, and reduced the Porta Asinaria and the Claudian aqueduct to their present ruinous condition. Within the basilica, in 1265, Charles of Anjou was invested with the kingdom of Sicily, and from the Benediction loggia which he had himself added to the Hall of the Wolf Boniface VIII in 1300 proclaimed the first Jubilee. The event is still illustrated by the fragment of a larger fresco now in the

holding an olive-branch. This well-known symbol of peace, frequent in the art of the Catacombs, was here triumphantly introduced to signalize the peace given to the long-persecuted Church by Constantine's victory at Saxa Rubra.

nave of the basilica, but originally in the loggia itself, depicting the reading of the Bull. Whoever painted it, the old attribution to Giotto is obviously incorrect: Sergio Ortolani suggests Maso di Banco, who may have painted it for the Jubilee of 1325.

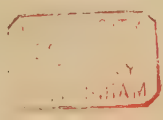
Occasionally a touch of humour or absurdity lights up the long story of the Lateran. There is rich farce, for example, in the story of the Byzantine official who set out confidently to capture Pope Sergius I, and instead found himself in wild flight from his own followers, from whom he only escaped by hiding under the Pope's bed! Comical, too, is the picture of the haughty Innocent IV, no sooner elected than pounced upon by a clamorous horde of Papal creditors, and compelled to lock himself in his bedroom for refuge. The most amusing episode of all, perhaps, was in 1328, when a simple friar of the Araceli was invested with the tiara by Ludwig of Bavaria. To the general consternation, the new Pope was immediately claimed *by his wife*! Deserted for the cloister, the good lady had accepted the situation philosophically enough, but she saw no reason why she should not share so unexpected a stroke of good fortune as her husband's elevation to the Papacy!

The Lateran atrium, or *Paradisus*, was crowded in the Middle Ages by the stalls of jewellers and money-changers, finally expelled by Innocent III. It was also a favourite place of burial, and Armellini quotes an epitaph—long since destroyed—which is an amusing example of post-mortem candour: HIC IACET IN FOSSA PIETROPAOLO BARBAROSSA LANIMA DEL QVALE CREDO MANERE MALE (Here in a ditch lies Pietro Paolo Barbarossa, whose soul, methinks, is in evil case!). Numerous Papal tombs formerly stood in the narthex, which occupied the site of the present porch. Among them was the tomb of the learned Sylvester II, the

tutor and friend of Otto III, who died—perhaps from poison—in 1001. By the ignorant Romans he was shunned as a necromancer, and some of the most curiously picturesque legends of the Middle Ages are woven about his name.

Here too was buried Alexander III, the triumphant opponent of Frederic Barbarossa of Germany, and who imposed penance on our own Henry II for the murder of Becket. Both Alexander and Sylvester now lie within the church. In the thirteenth century the two statues of Peter and Paul, which are now in the deambulatory, stood before the narthex: as examples of unintentional humour they are undoubtedly in the front rank. The bronze doors from the ancient Curia, dating probably from the reign of Domitian, were transferred to the main portal by Alexander VII, who enlarged them to the required dimensions by an outer band adorned with the stars and acorns of the Chigi arms. The statue of Constantine which is now in the porch was found in the remains of his Thermæ on the Quirinal, and was placed here in 1737.

Within the *confessio* is the tomb of Martin V (Colonna), elected by the Council of Constance to put an end to the long schism that followed the election of Urban VI in 1378. The casting was done by Simone Ghini and Antonio Averlino (usually known as Filarete), but it is possible that Donatello had a hand in the design. The fifteenth-century ciborium is adorned with paintings attributed by Berenson to Antoniazzo Romano. It contains the heads of SS. Peter and Paul, which were placed by Urban V in reliquaries richly decorated with gems. In spite of a special Bull for their protection, the jewels were stolen in 1438, though the thieves—including a canon of the Lateran!—were caught and burned alive in the piazza. The silver reliquaries themselves were carried off in the sack of 1527, and though



new ones were made, they too were destroyed in the troublous times that followed the French Revolution.

The decoration of the apse has undergone less alteration than any other part of the church. In spite of the almost complete rebuilding of the church in 896, and the restorations effected by Fra Jacopo Torriti in the thirteenth century for Nicholas IV, by far the greater part of the design is an almost exact reproduction of that of the fourth century. What is more, though the actual bust of the Saviour is a modern copy, the original bust, dating from the reign of Constantine, survived actually up to the last quarter of the nineteenth century, and was only then destroyed through the ignorance and carelessness of Leo XIII's architect.

The interest of these mosaics, considering the circumstances of their origin, can hardly be over-estimated. For the first time the fundamental dogmas of the Faith were fearlessly proclaimed in a building freely accessible to Christians and pagans alike. For the first time the Cross was proudly displayed as a symbol, no longer of humiliation and of death, but of the victory alike of Constantine and of Christianity.

The importance attached to the baptismal rite is seen in the fact that the Cross itself rises from the regenerating waters. It contains a tiny medallion depicting the baptism of Christ—further alluded to in the reclining figure of the Jordan below—while the solemn baptismal symbol of the stags who quench their thirst at the Waters of Life was intended as an appeal to follow the Saviour's example. Enclosed within the four rivers is the heavenly City, upon whose battlements appear the *imagines* of SS. Peter and Paul: a Cherub guards its gates, while upon a palm-tree within, the emblem of victory, perches a phœnix, a symbol of the resurrection of the dead.

Besides the figures of Nicholas IV, St. Francis of Assisi and St. Anthony of Padua, the additions of Torriti include most of the angels surrounding the Christ, together with the seraph overhead, where was originally the hand of God the Father, thus completing the Trinity. Torriti's own portrait is seen in the little monk kneeling on the left of the windows, while his assistant, Brother Jacopo da Camerino, occupies a corresponding position on the right.

The exquisite cloisters were begun in 1215 by Master Petrus and his son, Vassalectus. Like those of S. Paolo fuori le mura, they are a triumph of that wonderful art usually known as Cosmatesque from the name of its principal exponents, the family of the Cosmati. Beginning about the middle of the twelfth century, it attained its finest flowering in the thirteenth. The influence of classical models, though still evident, is transformed and overladen by new and alien influences from north and east—the restless fever and fantasy of the Gothic, the Oriental brilliance and colour of Byzantium.

Among the innumerable relics of the medieval Lateran in the cloisters are parts of a Gothic ciborium signed by Deodatus—chopped out with an axe, like early Norman work: a Papal throne of the thirteenth century: a Paschal candlestick—the Lion of Judah supporting the Pillar of the Church: a marble slab resting on four columns, once supposed to represent the height of Christ: and two bronze doors of 1196 from the private apartments of the old Patriarchium. To the left of these is the mutilated tomb-slab of Lorenzo Valla, the celebrated scholar who, after violently assailing the very foundations of the Temporal Power, was appointed Apostolic Scriptor by the Humanist Pope, Nicholas V, and died in 1457 a canon of the Lateran! The two admirable statuettes of the Baptist and the Evangelist were

made by Luigi Capponi of Milan in the fifteenth century for an altar which is now dismantled.

A little to the left of the entrance is a delightful relief, representing a funeral procession, where the bishop rests his heavy book on the head of a small acolyte, and the thurarius puffs vigorously at his thurible. Attributed with great probability to Arnolfo di Cambio, it formed part of the tomb of Cardinal Riccardo Annibaldi, who died about 1276 after playing no small part in the stirring drama of his times. A firm supporter and friend of Charles of Anjou, whom he enabled to land safely at Ostia, he joined in repelling the Ghibellines when they attacked Rome by night, placed the tiara on the head of Clement IV in 1265, and helped to invest Charles with the kingdom of Sicily.

Before leaving the cloisters, one should, if possible, visit the Treasury, which, among other objects of greater value (notably a fine fifteenth-century processional cross by Nicolà da Guardiagrele), contains an interesting—and amusing—*ex-voto* painted in 1516 for Canon Tommaso Inghirami. Known to his contemporaries as "Fedro," he had narrowly escaped being killed in an accident at the Arch of Titus, and in point of fact he died soon afterwards, probably from shock. The absurd attribution of the picture to Masaccio originated—one may hazard the guess—in a disrespectful but obviously appropriate nickname [1] for the worthy Tommaso himself.

The Baptistery—S. Giovanni in Fonte—likewise endowed with surpassing magnificence by Constantine, was long the only baptistery in Rome, and was the model of all others built elsewhere. It was constructed in part of the *thermæ* of the Domus Laterana, as is shown by the remains laid bare in 1926. Part of the original wall decoration in inlaid

[1] "Masaccio" means literally "fat Tom."

marbles is still in its place in the ancient entrance, which was in the direction of the basilica. Though converted into two chapels in the twelfth century, this entrance still retains on the left the beautiful mosaic decoration in green and gold acanthus scrolls on a dark blue ground, dating from the beginning of the fifth century.

Of the same period are the eight porphyry columns and octagonal architrave in the centre of the building, as well as the side chapels of the Baptist and the Evangelist, which were built by Pope Hilary in gratitude for his escape from the violence of religious fanatics at Ephesus. His name is inscribed on the bronze doors of the chapel of the Baptist, which are said to have been removed from the Baths of Caracalla. They weigh nearly three-quarters of a ton each, and the strange, organ-like notes which they emit when moved are believed to have suggested Dante's description of the doors of Purgatory, *che di metallo son suonanti e forti.*[1]

The twelfth-century doors of the opposite chapel were once in the private apartments of the Popes, and bear interesting representations of the old palace and basilica. The mosaic ceiling of this chapel, on the other hand, though restored, is of the time of Hilary, and is a curious mingling of classical and Christian motives. In the centre of the vault is the Mystical Lamb, surrounded by a garland of flowers, wheatears, grapes and olive-branches, representing the four seasons. In each of the eight compartments of the vault are two birds with a vase of fruit between them, symbolizing the four elements—ducks, for water; partridges, for earth; pigeons, for air; parrots, for fire. To this charming design the Byzantine formalism of the seventh-century mosaics in the adjoining chapel of St. Venantius—stern, almost

[1] "Which are of metal, ringing and strong."

gloomy, yet undeniably decorative in form and colour—presents an interesting contrast.

Probably the strangest scene ever witnessed in the Baptistery was in 1368, when Cola di Rienzi bathed in the antique bath of greenish granite that still serves as font. After spending the night in the building, he solemnly donned the spurs and girdle of knighthood, and, in the presence of a vast throng assembled in the piazza, summoned kings and princes to appear before his tribunal. The charger of Marcus Aurelius spouted wine, white and red, from its nostrils for the benefit of the crowd, while within the historic Triclinium of Leo III Cola presided over a great banquet, dish after dish emerging from a wonderful castle of pastry erected on the banquet table.

CHAPTER IX

THE CASTLE OF S. ANGELO

EVERYBODY knows the famous "Bridge of Sighs" at Venice, but the name might be applied with far greater justice to the Ponte S. Angelo at Rome. Built by Hadrian expressly for the passage of the Imperial funeral processions it was crossed in later centuries by countless generations of prisoners, while innumerable executions have taken place on or in front of it. In 1450 a panic caused by a restive mule resulted in nearly two hundred persons being trampled to death on the bridge or drowned in the Tiber. The disaster was commemorated by the erection of two small chapels, one on each side of the bridge-head, but they afforded such cover to sharpshooters during the siege of the castle in 1527 that they were replaced by the two existing statues of SS. Peter and Paul.

The castle of S. Angelo is the oldest, still inhabited, in the world, and by far the most romantic in its history—a tomb, a prison and a fortress. From foundation to summit it is still, at heart, Roman work of the early second century, though it has long lost the splendour of its pristine appearance.

It is probable that the great Mausoleum was designed by Hadrian himself, who was an accomplished architect. Standing upon an immense square base, a great drum supported a conical mound, planted with cypresses, from the centre of which rose a rectangular tower, in shape like a gigantic altar. Dominating the whole, probably, was a

colossal statue of Hadrian, drawn by the coursers of the Sun in a quadriga of gilded bronze. This magnificent monument was inspired, partly by the famous tomb of Mausolus, Prince of Caria—one of the seven wonders of the ancient world—and partly by such early Italic tumulus-tombs as one sees, for example, at Cervetri. Enriched with masterpieces of Greek statuary in marble and bronze, it was completely enclosed within a bronze grille adorned by gilt-bronze peacocks, emblematic alike of the Sun (Helios) and of the Aelian gens to which Hadrian belonged. Two of these peacocks are now in the Cortile di Belvedere of the Vatican, together with a huge bronze pine-cone—perhaps also taken from the Mausoleum—which, like the two birds, once formed part of a fountain in the atrium of old St. Peter's.

From the imposing vestibule, with its bronze gates and colossal statue of the Emperor, a winding passage, once adorned with marbles, stuccoes and mosaics, and dimly illumined by apertures in the roof, led to the very heart of the great pile—the vaulted sepulchral chamber, shaped like a Greek cross, the ancient symbol of the Sun. It was then in total darkness, save, perhaps, for a narrow opening on the south, above the doorway, by which a soft radiance might fall upon the central niche and the porphyry urn containing the Imperial ashes. In 1143 the urn, it is believed, was appropriated for the body of Innocent II, while the lid, after serving for centuries as a sarcophagus in the atrium of St. Peter's, is now—strange destiny!—the baptismal font.

Besides this first sepulchral cell were two others, one above another, in which, no doubt, were deposited the ashes, not only of all Hadrian's successors, from Antoninus Pius to Septimius Severus, but of their empresses and the

Imperial princes. The first—a gloomy, vaulted room whose appearance has considerably altered in the course of time—was, in the fifteenth century, converted into the court-room of the castle, while the second and uppermost, used by Paul III for storing the Papal archives, was turned by Sixtus V into a strong-room for the treasures which he accumulated during his reign. In the huge treasure-chests still to be seen there vast sums were amassed by his successors up to the end of the eighteenth century, nearly every *baiocco* of which was exhausted in paying the indemnity imposed on Pius VI by the Directorate of the French Republic.

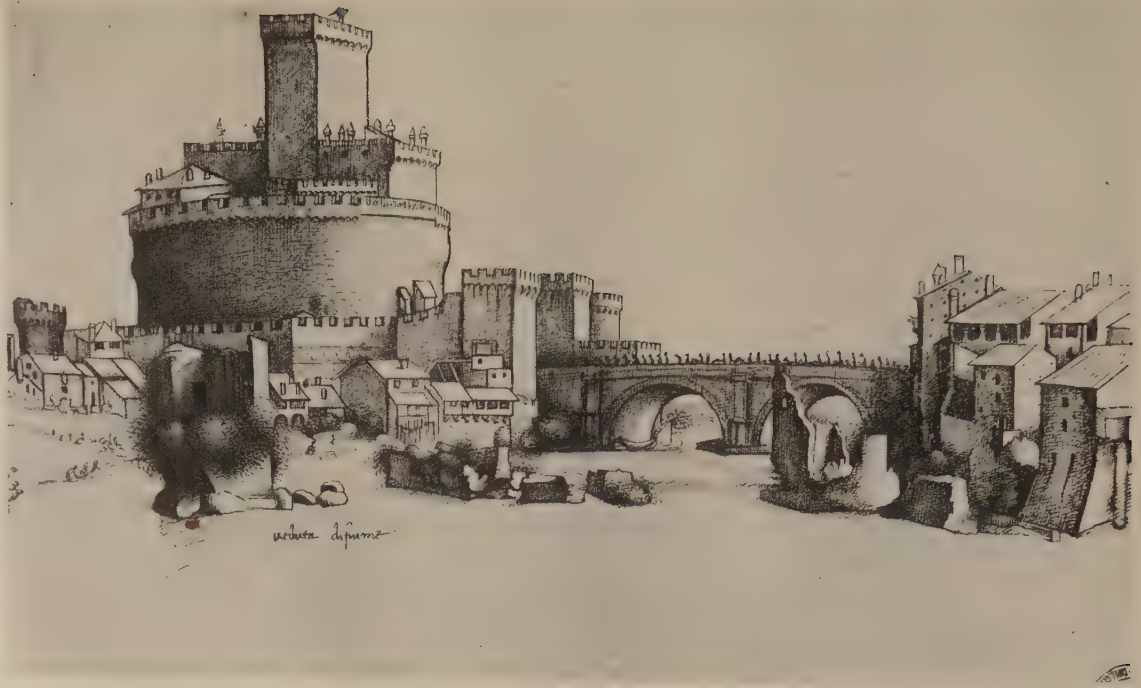
Converted by Aurelian into an outwork of the great girdle of walls and towers with which he surrounded the city, the Mausoleum was attacked by the Goths in 537, who were only repulsed on the very brink of success when the defenders in desperation tore the statues from their pedestals and hurled them on the stormers' heads. As early, probably, as the reign of Gregory the Great (590–604), the colossal bronze quadriga at the summit had already disappeared. It was replaced by a little chapel romantically dedicated to St. Michael *inter nubes*, which gave rise later to the legend—still commemorated by the figure of the Angel—that St. Michael had appeared above the monument while Gregory was leading a penitential procession over the Aelian bridge during a pestilence, and had stayed the ravages of the plague by sheathing his destroying sword.

By the tenth century the great altar-shaped tower seems already to have been converted to military purposes. In 931 the castle was held by the Senatrix Marozia, of the great house of the Counts of Tusculum, who were practically all-powerful in Rome and throughout Latium. Having murdered Pope John X, she placed one of her sons on the

Papal throne with the title of John XI. Her marriage in S. Angelo to Hugh of Provence, who had gained possession of the famous Iron Crown and proclaimed himself king of Italy, was bitterly resented by her other son, Alberic, who saw in it the ruin of his own prospects. A blow from the King, over whom he had splashed some water at dinner, precipitated the inevitable rupture. With fatal improvidence, Hugh had neglected to garrison the castle, and when Alberic and the Romans attacked it, he had no choice but to escape ignominiously. Marozia and the Pope spent the remainder of their lives in strict confinement—the one in S. Angelo, the other at the Lateran; while Alberic, one of the ablest rulers that Rome ever produced, governed the city firmly for nearly a quarter of a century in prosperity and independence.

The example of Alberic's success doubtless inspired the bold attempt of John Crescentius in 996, who expelled Gregory V from Rome, and from behind the lofty walls of S. Angelo maintained defiance to the Emperor Otto III for over a year. By fair means or foul, Otto at last succeeded in making himself master of the castle, and hanging Crescentius from the battlements. His death, however, was avenged by his beautiful wife, Stefania, who poisoned the infatuated Otto in a loving-cup.

Above the great drum, where once rose the cypress-planted tumulus—remains of which have been found below the store-chambers constructed by Alexander VI for oil and grain—one still sees the encircling wall built in the eleventh century by the ineffable Benedict IX, another scion of the Tusculan Counts, who was crowned Pope at the mature age of ten. This Elagabalus of the Papacy, whose career is an almost incredible nightmare of strife, murder and debauchery, managed to occupy the throne no less than



CASTEL S. ANGELO IN THE 15TH CENTURY.

three times—on one occasion actually selling the Papal office in order to be free to marry.

In 1379 the Romans succeeded in getting possession of the castle, and in a frenzy of hate against the Papal rule, endeavoured to demolish it. Though its immense solidity baffled their efforts, the great marble blocks, still sculptured with garlands and bucrania, were torn from their places, and scattered in heaps of mutilated fragments. For a time S. Angelo remained a deserted ruin, where goats pastured on the grass and weeds growing between the stones, and it was not till ten years later that it was re-fortified by Boniface IX. It was under Boniface that the *chemin-de-ronde* in which the visitor finds himself immediately upon entering from the street was hewn out of the solid square base of the mausoleum at the foot of the keep.

Of the many changes effected by later Popes perhaps the most extensive were those of Alexander VI, who, among other works, cut through the wall of the Imperial tomb-chamber, and built the sloping ramp leading from the drawbridge. The ancient winding corridor had, by this time, been converted into a series of terrible oubliettes, in one of which an unfortunate archbishop, imprisoned by Alexander, perished lingeringly of starvation, gnawing his own flesh for food. The shaft of a lift near the upper entrance to the corridor probably dates from the reign of Leo X, who, besides being fat, was more or less of an invalid.

Gazing round from the summit of the castle on the wonderful panorama of the city and hills, one perceives the tortuous passage, formed in part of the ancient Leonine wall, which connects S. Angelo with the Vatican. In 1527, when the mercenaries of Bourbon burst into the Borgo, Clement VII fled for his life along the corridor to the castle, while the historian, Paolo Giovio, flung his mantle over the Pope's

head lest he should be recognized and shot from below. In front of the castle gates a panic-stricken mob of fugitives fought and trampled one another for entrance: one cardinal was hauled up in a basket after the gates had closed, while another, old, wounded and half-suffocated, was dragged in through a window. For weeks together the miserable city, the richest and most luxurious in Christendom, was subjected to a hell of torture, outrage, plunder and desecration, compared with which the worst excesses of the Vandals or the Normans were trifling. Even the tomb of St. Peter, it is said, was ransacked for treasure, and the noblest ladies of Rome were dragged through the blazing streets to be diced or fought for by the savages of Spain or Germany.

As one passes from courtyard to courtyard, explores the luxury and beauty of the Papal apartments, or the gloomy secrets of the castle dungeons, the memories of S. Angelo crowd thickly upon the mind. How many a prisoner has languished within these walls!—the patriot, Arnold of Brescia, burned as a heretic by Adrian IV: the grim Cardinal Vitelleschi, the too-powerful legate of Eugenius IV, trapped to his murder by the castellan, Antonio Rido: the hapless Lorenzo Colonna, pitilessly done to death by Sixtus IV. The Pope had promised to spare his prisoner's life if the fortress of Marino were surrendered: but only the corpse, still scarred by rack and thumb-screw, was delivered to his mother in the Colonna church of the Holy Apostles. "Behold the faith of Pope Sixtus!" she exclaimed with terrible irony, as she held up her son's head before the people.

Still the phantoms arise—Beatrice Cenci, executed in front of the bridge with her stepmother and brother for Count Cenci's murder: Stefano Porcari, last, foredoomed dreamer of republican liberty, hanged for conspiracy against Nicholas V: Vittoria Accoramboni, the beautiful, evil

woman who sent her husband to his murder that she might wed her rich and powerful lover, Giampaolo Orsini, Duke of Bracciano: Giordano Bruno, the daring forerunner of Spinoza, burned for heresy in 1600: and others too many or too obscure to record here. In later times the most singular of the castle's unwilling occupants was the celebrated charlatan, Cagliostro, who, after being expelled from a monastery, implicated in the famous scandal of the Diamond Necklace—Carlyle's "mud-volcano"—and imprisoned in turn both in the Bastille and the Fleet, spent some of his last years in S. Angelo on a charge of heresy.

Most of all, probably, it is Benvenuto Cellini—the bragging, swaggering, unscrupulous, irresistible ruffian and genius—who meets us at every turn. His own Memoirs show him to us here larger, if anything, than life—bombarding Spaniards, bullying cardinals, melting down tiaras for the miserable Clement. It is extremely doubtful whether he ever really occupied the cell pointed out as his, but no one should fail to read his own account of his imprisonment—the mad gaoler who believed himself to be a bat, the damp, gloomy dungeon haunted by "tarantulas and venomous worms," and his terror lest he should be thrown into the Sammaló oubliette, where a man falls "down, down into a deep hole in the foundations of the castle."

Even more thrilling is the story of his escape. Lowering himself from the top of the keep by a rope made from his bed-linen, he managed to scale the outer wall at the cost of a broken leg. Crawling on all fours, he succeeded in wriggling under the gate, only to be attacked by a pack of savage dogs, whom he beat off with his dagger. A passing ass-driver carried him on his back to the steps of St. Peter's, whence he finally attained shelter in the palace of a friendly cardinal.

CHAPTER X

THROUGH THE BORGO TO ST. PETER'S

BETWEEN S. Angelo and St. Peter's lies the somewhat uninviting quarter known as the Borgo, which owes both its name and its origin to the Anglo-Saxon pilgrims who flocked in thousands yearly to the tomb of the Apostle. To meet their requirements Offa, King of Mercia, in 794 founded a hospice, from which in the thirteenth century developed the celebrated hospital of S. Spirito, rebuilt in its present form by Sixtus IV. Still another record of these far-off times is the little church, in the Borgo S. Spirito, of S. Michele in Sassia, the ancient church of the Frisians, which retains, not only its ninth-century campanile, but—apart from the supposed original at the Lateran—the only surviving Scala Santa in Rome.

The site of the Borgo Vecchio was once occupied by a long portico, extending from the Ponte S. Angelo to the steps of St. Peter's. Like Bernini's great colonnades to-day, it afforded a sheltered approach for the pilgrims, among whom appear such familiar figures as the youthful Alfred of Wessex, Canute the Dane, and Macbeth of Scotland. In 847 the Borgo and St. Peter's were sacked by the Saracens, who carried off an almost incalculable amount of plunder. Lanciani estimates the booty from St. Peter's at three tons of gold and thirty of silver, not to mention jewels and precious stuffs.

To prevent the recurrence of such a disaster, Leo IV enclosed the entire quarter with a strong wall, two of whose

massive towers still overlook the Vatican gardens. Thus was formed the Leonine city—a prototype, though on a larger scale, of the present Città Vaticana. Of the various gates in the wall there survives only the Porta S. Spirito, originally a mere postern, but monumentally transformed in the sixteenth century by Antonio da Sangallo. It was on the Leonine city that the first onslaught of Bourbon's army fell in 1527, and a bust and inscription in the Via dei Penitenzieri still record the heroism of the goldsmith, Bernardino Passeri, who died fighting, wrapped in a banner which he had torn with his own hands from the enemy. In spite of Cellini's claim, it was more probably Passeri whose bullet fatally wounded the Constable in the very act of scaling the walls.

The Borgo is full of memories. In the fifteenth century numerous inns and taverns—the Angel, the Sun, the Maiden, the Pilgrim's Staff—hung out their painted signs in every street. The Palazzo dei Penitenzieri, with its frescoes by Pinturicchio—none too easy to visit, unfortunately—was the residence of the notorious Cardinal Alidosi, the detested favourite of Julius II, who was murdered in the streets of Ravenna by Julius's nephew, the Duke of Urbino. Raphael lived and died in a palace built for him by Bramante on the site of the present Palazzo dei Convertendi, where converts to Catholicism used to be housed. The Cesi palace, in the Borgo Vecchio, belonged originally to the avaricious Cardinal Armellini, treasurer of Clement VII.

The finest, and perhaps the most interesting, palace in the Borgo, however, is the Palazzo Torlonia, which was built about 1500 by Cardinal Adriano da Corneto. It was in a *vigna* belonging to this palace, in the summer of 1503, that the famous dinner-party took place, when Pope Borgia and his son, Cesare, are said to have fallen victims to their

own devices by eating in error the poisoned sweetmeats which they had intended for their host; though it seems more probable that they simply contracted malaria. In 1504 the Cardinal presented the palace to King Henry VII of England for the use of the English Ambassador; and Henry VIII gave it in 1519 to Cardinal Campeggio, who had not yet been called on to deal with the thorny question of Henry's divorce.

The gloomy streets of the Borgo form, by contrast, an admirable preparation for the overwhelming effect of St. Peter's and its enormous piazza as one emerges into the Piazza Rusticucci. Nothing could be more dramatic than the majestic revelation of the vast and sunlit square, where the towering colonnades of Bernini lead the eye onward to the cliff-like façade and soaring dome of the immense church beyond. Prior to the seventeenth century the piazza di S. Pietro was of far smaller area: Cesare Borgia on one occasion even turned it into a bull-ring, killing six bulls with his own hand. On the steps of the old basilica Ludwig of Bavaria caused Pope John XXII to be proclaimed as a heretic in 1328: and here too, in 1500, the young Prince of Bisceglie, the husband of Lucrezia Borgia, was set upon and stabbed almost to death by Cesare's myrmidons.

The site of St. Peter's and the Vatican, in Imperial times, was occupied by extensive gardens belonging to the Crown, together with a circus built by Caligula, who adorned it with an obelisk imported specially from Heliopolis. Here it was that Nero, to stifle the suspicion of having himself caused the conflagration of Rome, entertained the populace by the light of the living and burning bodies of Christians whom he had seized as scapegoats. In A.D. 67 St. Peter was crucified head downwards beside the obelisk in the centre of the circus. His body was buried beside the Via Cornelia, which ran parallel to the circus, following the line of the

later church. Above the grave his followers raised a humble memorial, which Constantine, at the request of Pope Sylvester, replaced in the fourth century by a splendid basilica.

In the Middle Ages a confusion arose between the two *metae*, or goals, of the circus, midway between which St. Peter had been crucified, and two ancient monuments—the pyramid of Caius Cestius at the Porta S. Paolo and another Roman tomb formerly in the Borgo. These two monuments were believed to be the tombs of Romulus and Remus: and as they were also known as the *metae*, it was long believed that the Apostle's martyrdom had taken place on the Janiculum, which lies midway between them. The present church of S. Pietro in Montorio still marks the supposed spot, and indeed a church was erected there as early as the ninth century.

Of the Constantinian basilica, with its memories of over a thousand years, little is now visible. Then as now, it was the largest church in Christendom. Its walls glittered with mosaics, its altars with jewels and precious metals. A splendid quadroporticus surrounded the atrium, planted with palms and flowers to represent Paradise, and containing the famous fountain in the form of a huge bronze pine-cone, to whose size Dante compares the face of giant Nimrod in the *Inferno*. On the left of the church stood two curious circular edifices, one of which, converted in the Middle Ages into the chapel of S. Maria della Febbre, was finally demolished only in the eighteenth century. The other was an imperial mausoleum, in which were laid the remains of Honorius, Theodosius I, and probably also of Valentinian III. In 1445 here was discovered the sarcophagus containing the body of the Empress Maria, wife of Honorius, wrapped in cloth of gold and surrounded by all her wonderful jewels and other personal belongings in gold, crystal and agate, almost nothing of which, unhappily, remains to-day.

Such, in brief, was old St. Peter's—already five centuries old when, on Christmas Day, 800, Charlemagne received within it the crown of the resurrected western Empire. The great building was packed with an expectant crowd, for all knew, or at least surmised, what was about to happen. As the Frankish king rose from kneeling before the altar, Leo III placed the crown upon his head—much to Charlemagne's annoyance, since for political reasons he probably meant to crown himself—while from the dense throng, in the words once used at the coronation of a Caesar, resounded the solemn invocation, "Life and victory to Charles, the most pious Augustus, crowned by God, great and peace-giving Emperor of the Romans!"

The sentiments of the Romans, however, assumed a very different complexion towards the majority of Charles's successors. Leaving ruin and desolation in his track, ignorant even of the language of his Italian subjects, the medieval Emperor, as a rule, was regarded by the Romans as a tyrant and invader, and the crown had scarcely been placed on his head when he had to fight for his life against their furious attack as they burst, shouting their battle-cries, into the Borgo. Sometimes the provocation came from the Emperor himself, as when Henry V in 1111 seized and imprisoned Paschal II and his Curia in the cathedral itself, and massacred some of his adherents. The fury of the Romans was such that Henry himself was nearly killed, and the assailants were repulsed only after frightful slaughter.

But the fact is that St. Peter's was not only a church but a fortress. Both Henry IV and Frederic Barbarossa had to take the basilica by storm from the adherents of Gregory VII and Alexander III: the great doors were hewn down with axes, the church of S. Maria in Turri, beside the entrance to the atrium, went up in flames, and

the pavement of the cathedral of Christendom was strewn with the bodies of the slain. In 1095 the Crusaders who had responded to the appeal of Urban II were set upon at the very tomb of St. Peter by the followers of Urban's rival, Clement III, and instead of prayers and hymns the sacred building rang with yells of defiance and the angry clash of steel on steel.

By the fifteenth century the venerable basilica had reached so dangerous a pitch of dilapidation that Nicholas V —the personification of the Humanist tendencies of his age, who planned to transform the entire Borgo and Vatican into a self-contained Papal city of unheard-of magnificence —decided to rebuild the church entirely. The new St. Peter's, the plans for which may have originated with Leon Battista Alberti, was to take the form of a Latin cross crowned by an imposing cupola, which is precisely the form of the actual basilica of to-day. The project of Nicholas was vigorously renewed by Julius II, who wished the church to provide a setting for his own grandiose mausoleum, on which Michelangelo fruitlessly spent a great part of his life and energy. With the usual irony of Rome, the actual grave of Julius in the Chapel of the Sacrament lacks even an inscription, while the colossal figure of Moses at S. Pietro in Vincoli, which was to have been only one of more than forty statues on the completed monument, is a mere cenotaph.

The architect of Julius was the great Lombard, Bramante, who had already created the beautiful little "tempietto" at S. Pietro in Montorio. A man of irresistible genius, he proposed, in his own words, to "set the Pantheon on the Temple of Peace" (the Basilica of Constantine [1] in the Forum). His first intention was to build the church as a Greek cross, surmounted by an immense spherical cupola, but before his death in 1514 he had himself come to see

[1] Or of Maxentius.

that the Greek cross was unsuitable. It is therefore an error to abuse Paul V and his architect, Carlo Maderno, for elongating the nave in the seventeenth century so as to form a Latin cross, which was, in addition, more appropriate both for historical and liturgical reasons.

Bramante entered upon his task with a furious energy. So ruthlessly did he demolish the old basilica—columns, shrines, altars, tombs—that his dismayed contemporaries nicknamed him "Maestro Ruinante." It is even said that only the positive veto of Julius prevented him from shifting the tomb of St. Peter himself, and turning the façade of the basilica to the south so that the obelisk, then still erect in its original position, should be in front of the main portal. The first stone was laid by the Pope in person on April 18, 1506, and by the following year 2,500 men were at work on the building—"we could hold a review with them!" laughed Julius to the ambassador from Modena. The four grand piers of the central dome, together with the connecting arches, were already complete at Bramante's death. The great architect was buried in the basilica itself, but the site of his grave—strange to say—is utterly unknown.

The proportions of St. Peter's, so carefully planned by Bramante, were seriously interfered with by the younger Sangallo, who about 1538 raised the pavement to its present level. On his death, the work was entrusted, with unlimited powers, to Michelangelo, who, rejecting all intervening plans, returned to Bramante's earlier conception of a Greek cross: substituting, however, for the spherical dome modelled on that of the Pantheon a dome inspired by Brunelleschi's splendid achievement at S. Maria del Fiore. Even so, the dome planned by Michelangelo was much lower and flatter than that which we see to-day. It was reserved for the genius of Giacomo della Porta and Domenico

Fontana, who completed it in 1590, more than a quarter of a century after Michelangelo's death, to impart to it that final upward effect of majestic aspiration, soaring yet unshakable, which makes the dome of St. Peter's unique in architecture.

The crowning of St. Peter's crowned also the reign of Sixtus V (Peretti), who died in the same year. Four years earlier, in 1586, the same Domenico Fontana, his favourite architect, had undertaken the removal of the obelisk of Caligula to its present position in the centre of the piazza. No such engineering feat had been attempted since antiquity, and failure was generally prophesied, but Fontana was confident of success, and justified his confidence by carrying out the undertaking without a hitch in the presence of an enormous crowd. The well-known story of the sailor who, at a critical moment, risked his neck and averted disaster by shouting a warning to drench the ropes with water, appears, unfortunately, in the cold light of modern investigation, to be more dramatic than veracious.

It is the fashion to find fault with the façade of St. Peter's —"weak and unsuitable," as Baedeker calls it—which was completed by Carlo Maderno in 1614, and which, as Antonio Muñoz points out, is both organic in its conception and perfect in its equilibration. It was impossible for Maderno to raise the height of his attic lest he should conceal the cupola altogether, while the flanking towers, by which he intended to impart a compensating height and lightness to the façade, were never carried higher than the level of the balustrade, thus merely making the façade disproportionately long. From the balcony in the centre the election of a Pope is invariably proclaimed, and the new Head of the Church shows himself to the crowd below, and bestows his pontifical benediction *urbi et orbi*.

In 1626—more than a hundred and seventy years after

it had been begun—the great church was finally consecrated by Urban VIII (Barberini). One last master-stroke remained to be given. Between 1655 and 1657 Bernini erected the magnificent colonnade—a work unsurpassed in grandeur even in antiquity—its immense arms extended as though to gather all mankind into the bosom of the Church. Above the cornice an army of saints and martyrs waves the pilgrim encouragingly onward, while the two superb fountains toss their sparkling plumes against the blue like the waters of life itself. The entire piazza is thus converted into a vast atrium, such as could alone be worthy of the colossal basilica.

Ten million pounds sterling (pre-war value) are estimated to have been spent on the erection of the church alone, but this is far from representing its actual cost. That St. Peter's might arise, hundreds of more or less ruined but still surviving monuments—tombs, temples, basilicas, fora, even single statues and columns—were ruthlessly demolished and destroyed. The very lime and mortar used in building the church were derived from the wholesale incineration of ancient marbles, so that St. Peter's may be regarded as the gigantic mausoleum of Imperial Rome.

Nor is this all. It was to supply the vast sums which the work insatiably swallowed up that the scandalous sale of Indulgences, especially under Julius II and Leo X, attained the incredible degree of flagrancy by which absolution might be assured *in advance* for any crime, no matter how heinous. The abuse of Indulgences was one of the principal contributory causes of the Reformation, and the building of St. Peter's thus cost the Papacy the spiritual allegiance of half Christendom, and Europe a long agony of blood and hatred, from the massacre of St. Bartholomew to the Thirty Years War.

OLD AND NEW ST. PETERS IN THE 16TH CENTURY.

On the right, the Campanile of the old Basilica, with the Sistine Chapel behind it. On the left the present Basilica in process of erection.

CHAPTER XI

BELOW THE DOME

ON a day in June, in the year 1434, a clatter of hoofs was heard approaching the river-bank near the modern Ponte Sublicio. Looking round, the loiterers on the bank saw two monks approaching on mule-back, who seemed in considerable haste, and whose features were completely hidden in the shadow of their cowls. A boat was waiting, and the two monks, scrambling on board, were hurriedly rowed away down-stream. But suspicion had already been aroused, and within a few minutes a frenzied mob—yelling, cursing, and hurling spears and stones—was in hot pursuit of—the Pope himself!

Finding himself helpless in the face of a revolution, Eugenius IV had resolved upon escape, and at this moment lay crouched in terror at the bottom of the boat, protected by a shield from the missiles of his subjects that whistled past the ears of the perspiring rowers. Chance favoured the fugitive. One boat ran aground in the chase: another, which tried to bar the passage below S. Paolo, was old and rotten, and shrank from the encounter at the last moment. Reaching Ostia, the Pope boarded the vessel of a corsair, which was waiting by previous arrangement, and some weeks later arrived safely in Florence.

Five months later saw the Romans once more subjected by the Papal legate, the ferocious Cardinal Vitelleschi, who ruled the city with a rod of iron. Meanwhile, the Pope in Florence had commissioned Antonio Filarete to make

for St. Peter's the great bronze doors which confront the visitor as he enters the porch. Executed about 1440, they were the last notable addition to the medieval basilica. They are of great interest from the choice and variety of their subjects, though artistically far inferior to the famous doors made by Filarete's master, Ghiberti, for the Baptistery at Florence.

The six large panels, arranged in pairs, represent Christ and the Virgin enthroned: St. Paul, with the *vas electionis:* and St. Peter, with Eugenius kneeling before him: and the martyrdom of the two Apostles under the direction of Nero. The crucifixion of St. Peter is shown as taking place on the Janiculum, and the two so-called "metae" are duly depicted below. With a characteristic disregard for mere anachronisms, Filarete has also inserted an amusing reconstruction of the Mausoleum of Hadrian. Beside the right-hand "meta," the ancient tomb in the Borgo, a large tree illustrates its usual name of Terebinthus, or Terebinto, meaning a turpentine tree, but really a mere corruption of "trabinthus" (travertine), which in the Middle Ages signified any stone building. In the corresponding panel St. Paul is shown restoring to a pious lady, after his death, the bandage he had borrowed on his way to execution: the wild beasts in the background perhaps stand for the evil powers that were ravaging the infant Church.

The four smaller panels illustrate the principal events in the reign of Eugenius—the embarkation of the Emperor John VI Palaeologos from Constantinople in 1438 for the Council of Ferrara, and his departure after an interview with the Pope; the coronation in St. Peter's of the Emperor Sigismund; the visit of Pope and Emperor to S. Angelo, with Antonio Rido, the castellan, on horseback on the left; the submission of the Byzantine Patriarch to the Pope at

Florence; and the visit to Rome of dignitaries of the Ethiopian Church. Long Arabic inscriptions fill the inner edge of the large central panels, and adorn the haloes even of Christ and the Virgin. They are quite meaningless, and were doubtless copied for their decorative value from some Oriental brocade in the sculptor's possession.

Very curious are the innumerable small scenes that fill the scrolled border, and adorn the portals of the greatest of Christian churches with such oddly incongruous subjects as the Fox and the Crow, the Rape of Europa, and Leda seduced by Jupiter in the form of a swan! In place of motives drawn from the Scriptures, popular "mystery plays" or the beast-epos—the regular stock-in-trade of the medieval *marmorarius*, as, for example, in the cloisters of the Lateran —the equally child-like imagination of the Renaissance had eagerly seized upon the fables of Æsop, legends of Roman history, and stories from the *Metamorphoses* of Ovid. On the inner side of the doors, near the pavement, Filarete—who, by the way, eventually had to escape from Rome to avoid prosecution for relic-stealing—has represented himself in joyous procession with his assistants.

Of the three engraved tablets set high up in the entrance wall of the church, that furthest to the left commemorates the donation of some olive-grounds by Gregory II in the eighth century to provide oil for the church lamps, while that in the centre is the sepulchral inscription from the tomb of Adrian I, the intimate friend of Charlemagne: it is said to have been composed by the Emperor's famous secretary, Alcuin of York. The tablet on the right is inscribed with the text of the Bull by which Boniface VIII proclaimed the first Jubilee in 1300, thus reviving the tradition of the ancient *Ludi Seculares*—celebrated, as the Jubilee was originally intended to be, only once in every hundred years.

The Jubilee was the origin of the "Holy Door" (Porta Santa), solemnly opened in Jubilee year only—an idea said to be borrowed from the practice of never opening the ancient Porta Triumphalis save on the occasion of a triumph. It was for the Jubilee also that Cardinal Jacopo Stefaneschi, the friend of Boniface, commissioned Giotto to make his mosaic of St. Peter saved by Christ from sinking in the lake of Gennesareth—the famous "Navicella"—for the *Paradisus* of the old cathedral. The mosaic is now above the inner entrance of the porch, but has been so repeatedly restored as to leave nothing of Giotto's work now visible.[1]

Two million pilgrims, according to one chronicler, visited Rome for the Jubilee, drawn from nearly every European country. Among them were Dante (then Florentine ambassador), and his fellow-citizen, Matteo Villani, whom the spectacle of Rome inspired to write his famous Chronicle. Three years later the great Pope succumbed to the shock and humiliation of Anagni: his enemy, Sciarra Colonna, living to crown Ludwig of Bavaria in St. Peter's in 1328, in defiance of the fulminations which John XXII vainly hurled against him from distant Avignon.

The first impression of the interior is often one of disappointment. The real vastness of the building reveals itself only by degrees: the first shock comes when one discovers that the cherubs supporting the *aquasantieri* on each side of

[1] In the Museo Petriano, a small but highly interesting collection illustrative of the history of the basilica, is the head of an angel belonging to the original mosaic. This fragment was formerly in the Grotte Vaticane, the crypt of the basilica, where one treads the actual pavement of old St. Peter's. The Grotte are a perfect museum of relics of the old church, including the tombs of Adrian IV (Breakspeare), Boniface VIII, Urban VI, Nicholas V, the Emperor Otto II, and the beautiful sarcophagus of Junius Bassus, prefect of Rome, who died in 359.

the nave are actually youthful giants with wrists as thick as a normal man's thigh. But it is on a festal day, when a great crowd fills the building, that one really begins to comprehend its extent. It is said that 60,000 people can stand inside St. Peter's, 40,000 of whom can all see the High Altar.

On such a day one perceives how perfectly the huge basilica fulfils its purpose as a stage, a splendid background for that pageantry of which the Catholic Church so well understands the value. The primary intention of St. Peter's is not devotion but display. A Gothic cathedral lifts the spirit to soaring planes of apocalyptic mystery: St. Peter's keeps its feet firmly on the ground. In other churches the imagination may lose itself, if it will, in dreams and visions of another world: St. Peter's recalls it as with a trumpet-blast to the splendid and solid realities of this, and proclaims with unshakable confidence the grandeur and glory of the Church Terrestrial.

The enormous porphyry disk in the pavement of the nave, a little beyond the entrance, was originally in front of the High Altar. It is the historic Rota Porphyretica, on which every emperor, from Charlemagne to Frederick III, knelt for his coronation. Beyond it extend a series of measurements showing the lengths of other great churches as compared with that of St. Peter's. The longest is our own St. Paul's, which would fit inside comfortably with over thirty feet to spare.

The first chapel in the right aisle contains the famous Pietà which Michelangelo, then only twenty-five years of age, executed in 1499 for the ambassador of Louis XII, Cardinal Jean Villiers de la Groslaie. It is unique among the master's works in being signed, Michelangelo having been annoyed one day by hearing some strangers attribute

it to a sculptor from Milan. To a critic who objected that the Virgin seemed too young, Michelangelo replied that virgins preserved their youthful appearance much longer than other women.

A little beyond is the monument of that strange creature, Christina of Sweden, who wore her hair cut short and dressed for preference in man's clothes. The daughter of the great Gustavus Adolphus, the champion of Protestantism, she abdicated the throne and was received into the Catholic faith at Innsbrück, afterwards coming to Rome, where she was accorded a tremendous reception. She took up her residence in the palace (now Corsini) originally built by Cardinal Domenico Riario, nephew of Sixtus IV, where Erasmus had once been a guest. Here she devoted herself to learning and alchemy, and founded the famous literary academy known as Arcadia. Eccentric, greedy and hot-tempered, and always passionately insisting on all the privileges of the rank she had abandoned, she continued to delight the Roman gossips and embarrass the Papal government till her death in 1689. The darkest stain on her memory is the murder of her secretary, Monaldeschi, which was carried out at Fontainebleau not only by her orders, but almost under her very eyes.

On the adjoining pillar is the monument of a woman still more famous—Matilda, Countess of Tuscany, whose unfaltering support of Gregory VII in his long struggle against Henry IV of Germany over the question of Investitures profoundly influenced the history of the Papacy. Every one will remember the dramatic scene at Canossa, when, through Matilda's intercession, the helpless and humiliated Emperor was at last permitted to prostrate himself before the Papal throne after humbly waiting for three days, barefooted and in penitential garb, in the snow of the

castle courtyard. The vast estates which she bequeathed to the Papacy on her death in 1115 formed to a great extent the basis of the Temporal Power. Her remains were transferred hither in the seventeenth century by Urban VIII.

The beautiful Chapel of the Sacrament was designed by Borromini. It contains a magnificent ciborium by Bernini, but the bronze tomb of Sixtus IV, by Antonio Pollaiuolo, is now in the Museo Petriano. Beyond the chapel is the tomb of Gregory XIII (Boncompagni), the reformer of the calendar, who began the building of the Quirinal palace as a summer residence for the popes, and celebrated with fervent thanksgivings the tidings of the massacre of St. Bartholomew. A little further on is a superb mosaic copy of Domenichino's masterpiece, "The Last Communion of St. Jerome," for the original of which the painter received the magnificent equivalent of ten guineas! It is worth noting, by the way, that, with the exception of two early frescoes from the old church, which are very easy to overlook, there are no paintings, but only mosaic reproductions, in St. Peter's. Mosaic, as Ghirlandaio said, is the only painting for eternity.

Passing the tomb of Benedict XIV, the tolerant and witty friend of Voltaire, one traverses the Sahara of the right transept, and reaches Canova's monument to Clement XIII. With its rather too well-nourished lions and its preposterous figure of Religion, the monument nowadays fails to evoke the transports of admiration which it elicited in 1792. Its best feature is perhaps the figure of the Pope himself, who died—of poison, so it was whispered—on the eve of abolishing the Society of Jesus, which had already been expelled from Portugal, France and Spain. The adjoining chapel contains a mosaic copy of Guido Reni's masterpiece of St. Michael, of which legend declares that the Devil is a

malicious portrait of Innocent X, painted to please the Barberini family. The original is at the church of the Cappuccini in the Via Vittorio Veneto, with its famous cemetery *au Grand Guignol.*

The centre of the apse Bernini, with fine inspiration, devoted to the Chair of Peter—the *summa Petri sedes*—in which the magnificent basilica of the Apostle thus culminates. The conception is carried out in the extreme style of the baroque. Supported by four great Doctors of the Latin and Greek Churches, while above the Mystical Dove hovers amid a glory of angels, the Throne of Bernini is really an immense reliquary enclosing an ancient *sedia gestatoria*, which was long supposed to have been the pontifical seat of St. Peter.

This interesting relic, which is never shown nowadays, appears to have been placed by Pope Damasus about 366 in the newly built baptistery of St. Peter's. The tradition connecting it with St. Peter is as old as the second century. Made of oak, restored at some later period with acacia wood, it is decorated with two distinct series of carved ivory bands and panels, some of which, representing the labours of Hercules, have been carelessly put on upside-down—perhaps in the sixth century. There appears, however, to be no truth in the assertion made by Lady Morgan that it bears the Arabic inscription, "There is no God but Allah, and Mohammed is His Prophet."

The tomb on the right of the Cathedra Petri is likewise by Bernini. It is that of Urban VIII, builder of perhaps the most magnificent of all Roman palaces, the Palazzo Barberini. It was under Urban that Galileo was prosecuted on a charge of heresy, though the story that he was put to the torture is as fabulous as that he exclaimed "Eppur si muove!" after his formal recantation of the theory of the

earth's movement. The tomb of Paul III, opposite, is by Giacomo della Porta, who, in the magnificent head, has come very near to the force of Michelangelo. The tomb is not in its original position, and two of the four figures that formerly surrounded it have disappeared. The remaining figures of Wisdom and Justice were originally nude, their actual draperies being later additions of coloured metal. There is, however, no reason whatever to believe that they are, as is frequently stated, portraits of the Pope's mother and his sister, the beautiful Giulia Farnese. It was Paul III who, in 1540, formally recognized the Society of Jesus founded by Loyola. His son, the infamous Pierluigi, was deservedly murdered at Piacenza in 1547, and Paul himself died two years later, at the age of 82, broken-hearted at the duplicity and ingratitude of his grandsons.

In the Cappella della Colonna, on the southern side of the church, a pictorial relief by Algardi denotes the burial-place of the great Pope, Leo I, whose personal intercession saved Rome in 452 from destruction at the hands of Attila and his Huns. Here too lie Leo III and Leo IV. Beyond the left transept is the entrance to the Sacristy, added in the eighteenth century. Besides a ninth-century bronze cock from the belfry of old St. Peter's, it contains a triptych attributed to Giotto, and a beautiful ciborium by Donatello. In the cathedral treasury are a gold and jewelled cross presented by the Emperor Justin in the sixth century, and a magnificent dalmatic—or rather *sakkos*, which takes the place of the dalmatic in the vestments of the Greek Church—which tradition says was worn by Charlemagne at his coronation. It is, however, more probably a work of the tenth or even twelfth century.

Dignified, if somewhat frigid, is Thorwaldsen's monument to Pius VII (Chiaramonti), whom Napoleon sum-

moned to Paris to assist at his coronation in Notre Dame. Despite his subsequent ill-treatment by the Emperor, Pius did all he could to intercede for him at St. Helena, and showed marked kindness to the members of his family in Rome. Close by is a huge mosaic copy of Raphael's "Transfiguration," the unfinished altar-piece which was placed, after his death, at the head of the bed on which his body lay. Completed by his pupils, it is now in the Vatican picture-gallery.

Though generally closed, it is occasionally possible to visit the Choir Chapel, imposingly decorated in gilding and stucco from designs by Giacomo della Porta. The choir-stalls, with their fascinating series of carvings from the Old and New Testaments, were executed for Urban VIII, and are practically unique in Rome. In the adjoining chapel of the Presentation is a niche, visible from the outside, where the remains of each Pope are deposited until his permanent tomb has been completed.

The finest tomb in St. Peter's, and the only one which is still more or less as it appeared in the earlier church, is that of Innocent VIII (Cibo), who died in 1492, little more than a week before Columbus set sail for America. It is the work of Piero and Antonio Pollaiuolo. Below, the Pope lies upon his bier: above, surrounded by the cardinal Virtues—less conspicuous in his lifetime—he sits enthroned, holding the Sacred Lance sent him by Sultan Bayazid. Under his weak and venal rule, lawlessness in Rome rose to an almost inconceivable height, and rape and murder were virtually the order of the day. A wealthy criminal had little to fear. "Our Lord desireth not the death of a sinner," was the cynical comment of the Papal Camerarius on a more than usually atrocious murder, "but rather that he should pay and live!"

Opposite the lift by which one ascends to the roof is Canova's monument to the exiled Stuarts, whose bodies lie below in the crypt. It was erected at the expense of George IV, who had been on terms of friendly correspondence with the last surviving Stuart, Cardinal York. Leo XII, a narrow-minded reactionary, was so shocked by the nudity of the angels guarding the tomb that he insisted on them being given metal breeches! Facing the monument, above the doorway, is the mosaic portrait of Maria Clementina Sobieski of Poland, wife of the Old Pretender: and, beyond it, the baptistery, with the historic font beneath which, if tradition speaks truly, once slept the ashes of Hadrian.

No one who gets the chance should fail to attend one of the great ceremonies in St. Peter's, such as the Pontifical Mass celebrated on the anniversary of the Papal coronation. There may easily be anything between 25,000 and 30,000 people in the church, but a broad avenue is kept by wooden barriers from end to end of the central nave, widening out in a circle below the great dome, suspended 400 feet above the pavement. Our places—we will suppose—are directly in front of Maderno's splendid Confessio, where eighty-nine gilt-bronze lamps form, day and night, a carcanet of golden fire before the Apostle's tomb. The tomb itself, deep below the Papal altar, no human eye has beheld for centuries. Whether St. Peter's body still lies within it, or was destroyed by the Mohammedans in the ninth, or even the hordes of Bourbon in the sixteenth century, will probably never be known.

Nowadays, unfortunately, it is difficult to descend into the Confessio, but the sumptuousness of its marble decoration is visible from above. At the foot of the stair kneels Canova's statue of the unfortunate Pope Braschi, Pius VI, who died

in exile at Valence in 1799, the prisoner of the French. Below the altar, gilt-bronze doors conceal a small chamber, in which are a seventh-century mosaic of Christ and a golden casket containing the *pallia*, the ornaments of white lambs'-wool for which formal application must be made by every newly elected patriarch or archbishop. They are woven by the nuns of S. Cecilia in Trastevere from the wool of two tiny lambs, which are solemnly blessed on the 21st of January (St. Agnes's Day) before the altar of S. Agnese on the Via Nomentana.

The high altar is reserved solely for the Pope, who faces the congregation in the ancient manner. Towering above it, and adorned with the Barberini bees, is the grandiose bronze canopy which Bernini erected for Urban VIII. The portico of the Pantheon was plundered of its bronze trusses to provide the material, a vandalism which gave rise to the famous pasquinade that the Barberini had done what even the Barbarians had refrained from doing—*quod non fecerunt Barbari fecerunt Barberini*. None the less, it is a masterpiece of art, and perfectly proportioned to the immensity of the building. The great spiral columns reproduce on a vast scale the similarly shaped marble columns of the ancient iconostasis,[1] of which eleven—there were originally twelve—are still in St. Peter's. Eight decorate the balconies of the great central piers, two are in the Chapel of the Sacrament, and one—now enclosed within an iron grille in the Chapel of the Pietà—was long believed to be that against which Christ leaned when disputing with the doctors in the temple at Jerusalem. Whether the columns are Roman work of the fourth century, or were brought from Asia Minor, is uncertain.

[1] The iconostasis is clearly seen in Fr. Penni's fresco, "The Donation of Constantine," in the last of the Stanze of Raphael in the Vatican.

So perfectly is the baldacchino proportioned to the space surrounding it that probably few realize that it is only a few centimetres lower than the Columns of Trajan and Marcus Aurelius. Another curious detail will be observed on the marble pedestals of the columns, which are said to have been presented by a niece of the Pope in gratitude for her safe delivery of a son. Beginning on the left of the Confessio, nine will be found to be sculptured with a female face, the expression becoming steadily more marked, while the tenth, on the right of the Confessio, bears the laughing features of a baby!

Wedged against the barrier, with two damsels from New York volubly conversing on one side, a little, old, apple-cheeked French nun on the other, and a gaunt Spanish pilgrim incessantly breathing prayers and garlic down one's neck, one stares up at a festoon of lights twinkling about the marble balcony above the altar of St. Veronica. Thence, when the Pope comes, will be displayed the four major relics—the head of St. Andrew, the largest existing fragment of the True Cross, the Lance with which the centurion Longinus pierced the side of Christ, and the Sudarium, or napkin, with which—so says the legend—St. Veronica wiped the face of the Saviour on his way to Calvary, and which was miraculously impressed with his likeness. These four relics are respectively preserved in the four enormous piers, whose dimensions correspond exactly to those of Borromini's graceful little church of S. Carlino at the Quattro Fontane.

The earliest reference to the Sudarium is in 707, when John VII placed it in a chapel which he had dedicated to the Virgin. Later on it was temporarily transferred to S. Spirito, where the keys of the chest containing it were guarded by six Roman nobles in return for the gift of two

cows with which to make a feast at Pentecost. An interesting fragment of the fourteenth-century reliquary is preserved in the sacristy. The few and faded outlines of what is perhaps a Byzantine ikon—the sight of which is supposed to remit seven thousand years of purgatory—are, of course, totally indistinguishable from below.

The head of St. Andrew was brought to Rome in 1462, nine years after the fall of Constantinople, by Thomas, despot of Bosnia, a dejected member of the ex-Imperial family of the Palaeologi, who had been driven out by the Turks. Pius II, with a thousand priests carrying palms, received the precious relic with tears at the Ponte Molle, and carried it in his own hands to S. Maria del Popolo, where he spent the night. On the following day a magnificent triumphal procession, a mile long, including 30,000 candle-bearers, escorted the head to St. Peter's, through streets gay with hangings and music.

Similar scenes attended the arrival of the Holy Lance in 1492. Ten years previously Prince Djem, the younger son of Mohammed II, the conqueror of Constantinople, had arrived in Rome after an unsuccessful rebellion against his brother, Bayazid II. Innocent VIII received him with the honours due to a sovereign, and assigned him quarters in the Vatican, where, however, he remained a prisoner rather than a guest. Bayazid, in fact, failing to get his rival assassinated, had agreed to pay the Pope 40,000 ducats a year to keep him in custody, and the Lance of Longinus was despatched to Rome as an additional bribe. The Vatican could thus afford to ignore the pretensions of Paris and Nuremberg, both of which had long and simultaneously claimed to possess the sacred relic.

Halberd on shoulder, in steel corslets and morions, a company of the Swiss Guards marches up the nave, and

takes up its position round the barrier. Said to be designed by Michelangelo, their uniform [1] is at all times one of the most picturesque survivals in Rome, but armour is worn only on special occasions. First enrolled in 1510 by Julius II—whose armorial oak-tree is still to be seen stamped upon their morions—they are slightly later in origin than our own Beefeaters, whose first recorded appearance, I believe, was at the coronation of Henry VII in 1485. As for the officer in charge, with his curling moustaches, small pointed beard, and armour inlaid with gold, he looks like a portrait by Velasquez—and knows it!

Across the nave is the famous bronze statue of St. Peter, festally arrayed to-day in cope and tiara, with an enormous ring on its finger. The left foot is deeply worn away by the kisses of the faithful, just as in the time of Cicero the chin of the bronze Hercules at Agrigentum had been worn smooth by the kisses of its worshippers. Tradition declares that the statue was cast by Leo the Great from the ancient image of the Capitoline Jupiter in gratitude for Rome's deliverance from Attila. Discussion is still rife as to whether it is really a fifth-century work, or was made in the thirteenth century, perhaps by Arnolfo di Cambio, to replace a marble figure of St. Peter which is now in the Grotte. This marble statue, which is evidently the transformed effigy of some pagan philosopher, was formerly above the main

[1] The original uniform was merely the Swiss doublet and hose and black velvet cap. The colours appear to have undergone considerable variation. In Raphael's "Mass of Bolsena" the kneeling guards behind Julius wear a costume of green and white, combined with red and yellow. Under Leo X the uniform was striped white and red; in 1523 a report of the Venetian ambassador describes it as white, green and yellow; while in the eighteenth century it seems to have been yellow, slashed with red and blue. The colours now worn are black, red and yellow.

door of the old basilica. So deeply was it revered that Gregory II, in his controversy with the iconoclast Emperor Leo the Isaurian regarding image-worship, declared that it was regarded literally as God on earth.

The open space beneath the dome is now filling fast. Papal gendarmes saunter up and down in huge busbies, tight white breeches and enormous boots, like supers in "Madame Angot." The Palatine Guard—youthful faces crowned by plumed shakos—line the nave. Violet-robed ecclesiastics converse with Papal chamberlains in black velvet costumes of the sixteenth century, with cape on shoulder and rapier on hip. Officers of carabinieri, in silver-braided coats and red, white and blue plumes, exchange salutes with the commander of the Papal gendarmerie, who, in his cocked hat and cavalry boots, looks like an admiral of Horse Marines. Drawn swords flashing, splendid in scarlet tunics and crested bronze helmets, the Noble Guard marches up the nave, and draws up on each side of the Papal altar. As its name implies, the *Guardia Nobile* is composed solely of members of the Roman aristocracy, which is probably the oldest in Europe.

And now at last a blare of silver trumpets bursts from the gallery above the central doors, and the vast throng sways and strains in its efforts to see. Far away, at the extremity of the vast basilica, appears a canopy of cloth of silver, a confused glitter of steel and gold and colour. Still the trumpets continue to peal forth their solemn strain: and slowly, very slowly, the silver canopy advances, till one can almost touch the spectacled, impassive figure beneath, with its right hand lifted repeatedly in token of benediction. "Evviva il Papa! evviva il Papa!"—the cathedral is filled with enthusiastic cries, while a snowstorm of waving handkerchiefs flutters over the heads of the crowd. A golden

mitre crowns the Pope's head, the Pontifical ring gleams upon his finger, his robes, of heavy cream silk, are covered with gold embroidery. Before him, on velvet cushions, are borne the tiara and the keys—"the golden opes, the iron shuts amain."

"Evviva il Papa! evviva il Papa!" Slowly, slowly, passes by the long procession of friars, *camerieri segreti*, and dignitaries of the Church: slowly, slowly the *sedia gestatoria* is borne past, shoulder high, by eight bearers in embossed velvet of dull cerise. On either side an attendant carries aloft an enormous ostrich-feather fan: behind, in front and at the side, walk chamberlains, mace-bearers, Noble Guards, gendarmes, and sword-bearers with huge, wavy-edged swords. Armour and jewels and gold, military uniforms and ecclesiastical robes, the shouts of the crowd and the triumphant music of the trumpets, combine with the marbles, statues and mosaics of the largest church in the world to form a scene to which the modern world can hardly offer a parallel, and which produces an effect on the imagination difficult, perhaps impossible, to describe.

CHAPTER XII

THE CAMPUS MARTIUS

THE Corso Umberto, which stretches from the Piazza Venezia to the Porta del Popolo, follows almost exactly the line of the old north road, the Via Flaminia, which started from the "Servian" wall at a point between the Capitoline and the Quirinal. Like all Roman roads, it was lined for miles beyond the city with sepulchral monuments. Two such stand beside it to-day. The one, now a mere fragment, was erected by the Senate nearly two thousand years ago in recognition of the services to the State of a certain C. Publicius Bibulus. The other, halfway up the immense monument to Victor Emanuel, is the tomb of Italy's Unknown Soldier, over whose remains, enclosed like a sacred relic in the Altar of the Fatherland, watches, austere and solemn, the image of Divine Rome.

The low-lying area between the Corso and the Tiber is the ancient Campus Martius—once an open plain devoted to agriculture and military exercises. In course of time, especially under the Empire, it was covered, not only with the dwellings of the ever-increasing population, but with magnificent monumental buildings—temples, baths, circuses, theatres and porticoes. In the centuries that succeeded the fall of Rome, most of these wonderful structures either disappeared more or less completely, or were converted into churches or fortresses. Slowly the wheel turned; and with the development of a new civilization the

Campo Marzio became once more enriched with splendid temples and palaces, that towered like giant trees amid the dark jungle of medieval alleys and the shapeless mounds of half-buried ruins. Up to comparatively recent times, it was, in fact, the most thickly populated portion of the city: and even to-day, with its narrow and labyrinthine streets, its thrilling associations, and its perpetually recurring contrasts between classic, medieval and Renaissance Rome, its characteristic fascinations are scarcely affected by the changes which have done, and are doing, so much to transform the remainder of the capital.

Let us begin with the noble palace [1] erected in the fifteenth century by the Venetian Cardinal Barbo, who incorporated in it the old fourth-century basilica of St. Mark of which he was titular. Both for its materials and for much of its architectural features—for example, the portico and loggia of the church, and the beautiful, though unfinished, courtyard [2]—the Palazzo Venezia is heavily indebted to the Colosseum. It continued to be Barbo's favourite residence even after his election to the Papacy as Paul II in 1464, and his private apartments—now a museum of medieval art—retain much of their original decoration. One seems to see the handsome, jovial Pontiff, poring with rapturous absorption over his marvellous collection of cameos and intaglios, giving audiences to ambassadors in the small hours of the morning—a habit which did not contribute to his popularity with the *Corpo Diplomatico*—or watching from the windows the Carnival races of Jews, courtesans and riderless horses from which the Corso takes its name.

It was Paul who concentrated these Carnival festivities

[1] Now the official headquarters of Signor Mussolini.

[2] Where the famous bronze horses of St. Mark were "stabled" during the war.

in the Corso, inaugurating them with a wondrous pageant representing the triumph of Augustus, in which senators and soldiers, giants, nymphs, gods and heroes were followed by *four waggon-loads of poets*, all lustily carolling the pontifical munificence! A typical Venetian, he loved splendour of all kinds, and no price was too great for anything that caught his fancy, from MSS. to mosaics. His tiara alone cost 200,000 florins, and the representative of the Apostles complacently displayed on his finger an emerald far surpassing any gem that the Apostles themselves could boast of on their reliquaries at the Lateran. A decided autocrat, he nearly precipitated a schism by his refusal to abide by the Capitulations he had signed before his elevation: consoling the enraged cardinals with the privilege—so characteristic of the splendour-loving Pope—of wearing scarlet robes and pearl-embroidered mitres!

The building of the palace led to the discovery of the colossal bust of a priestess of Isis, which now stands in the corner of the piazza S. Marco. It is familiarly known as "Madonna Lucretia"—probably after the former mistress of Alfonso of Naples, the beautiful Lucrezia d'Alagno, who was then living in Rome. Fantastically crowned, and robed in sumptuous brocades, the statue played a conspicuous part in the annual festivities of St. Mark's Day. In 1799, however, she suffered, like other aristocrats, for her ancient birth. Hurled from her pedestal by the revolutionary mob, she lay face downwards in the mire, where a humorist scrawled in chalk across her shoulders, "Non ne posso veder piu!"—"I can bear (literally, 'see') no more!"

Taught humility by her fall, up to the middle of last century she presided each May Day over the "ballo de' guitti" (Beggars' Ball) which took place in the piazza. Her face reddened, and her brows wreathed with leeks and

garlic, she placidly accepted the raucous greetings of the ragged mob that whirled in a frantic cotillion at her feet, and the grinning curtseys of the couples, who, by rigid custom, presented themselves before her. This singular festival died out only in 1854—the year in which the piazza was illumined by the first gas-lamps ever seen in Rome!

At the corner of the Corso is the Palazzo Buonaparte, where the mother of the great Emperor lived almost in seclusion till her death in 1836. She had implored the Allies to allow her to share her son's exile at St. Helena, but the letter was ignored as a political ruse. In her last years she was all but wholly blind, and the story goes that, when she was dying, the *portiere*, for a consideration, used actually to admit inquisitive visitors to peer at her from behind a screen.

Beyond it is the magnificent Doria palace, said to occupy two-thirds the area of St. Peter's. The original palace, a comparatively humble building, was so transformed by Cardinal Santoro, that Julius II, on being invited to view it, declared it was fitter for a secular duke than for a prince of the Church, and compelled the unfortunate Santoro, who died from grief not long afterwards, to bestow it on Julius's nephew, the Duke of Urbino. The beautiful court which one sees from the Corso was possibly designed by Bramante, but the late baroque façade was added only in the seventeenth century. Besides several fine Claudes, the picture-gallery contains a Velasquez—the portrait of the Pamfili Pope, Innocent X—which, once seen, is unforgettable.

The palace opposite belongs to Prince Odescalchi, head of one of the oldest and wealthiest families in Italy. It is best seen from the neighbouring Piazza SS. Apostoli. In the last century the youthful Marion Crawford lived there

for a while with his brothers and sisters, one of whom, in her Memoirs, tells thrilling tales of its ghostly associations. Every night at twelve o'clock—so she declares—a large black coach rolled silently up before the palace, and a tall figure, wrapped in a long black cloak, alighted and passed into the shadow of the great portal—then bricked up—after which the coach drove on a few paces and vanished. Nowadays, though the portal has been reopened, the phantom perversely refuses to make use of it. In the small Muti-Papazzurri palace at the end of the piazza the "Old Pretender" died, and the "Young Pretender" was born. The last of the family, Cardinal York, used to gallop hither in his coach and four from his palace at Frascati, where he died in 1807—"King by the will of God," to quote his own words, "but not by the will of man."

On the other side of the square is the palace of the Colonna, whose hereditary feud with their great rivals, the Orsini, is practically synonymous with the medieval history of Rome. The present palace, whose exterior gives little hint of the magnificence within, is mostly of the eighteenth century, but for more than a thousand years the houses of the Colonna have stood upon the same spot. The palace of the fiery Sciarra, who set the Imperial crown on the head of Ludwig of Bavaria and in the arms of his own family, was further along the Corso: but it was here that Petrarch dwelt as guest of the veteran Stefano—the magnificent old man who awed a band of robbers by the mere dignity with which he proclaimed himself "Stefano Colonna, a Roman citizen," and who, when an enemy asked him jeeringly, exiled and impoverished, "Where are your fortresses now?" laid his hand upon his breast and answered proudly, "Here!"

Here in 1484 the gallant and unfortunate Lorenzo Colonna defended himself against the attack of Girolamo

Riario and the Orsini. Here, in 1527, the Marchesa Isabella Gonzaga, who had prudently turned the palace into a fortress, sheltered three thousand fugitives from the horrors of the sack of Rome. Here, in gloomy state, lived Marcantonio Colonna, the hero of Lepanto: and here too the noble-minded Vittoria, widow of the hapless Marchese di Pescara, came often to converse with Michelangelo, Ariosto and Baldassare Castiglione in the same gardens amid which the poet Tasso later spent many of his childhood's hours.

The church of the Apostles, adjoining the palace, was practically the private chapel of the family. From a balcony in the church, connected with the palace by a corridor, live fowls and a pig, loudly protesting, used to be lowered on May Day to be jumped and scrambled for by the mob below. Within the porch is the tomb of the unfortunate Lorenzo, beheaded, after hideous tortures, by order of Sixtus IV. Oddly enough, there are no other Colonna tombs, though there are numerous memorials of their old enemies, the Riari and della Rovere. An especially sumptuous monument is that of Pietro Riario, nephew of Sixtus. Created cardinal at twenty-one, he was heaped with benefices to the tune of 60,000 ducats a year—far less than sufficient, however, for one who embroidered his mistress's slippers with pearls, and who, in the two brief years before his death, had squandered 300,000 ducats on his table alone! The astounding extravagance with which he entertained Eleonora of Aragon here in 1473, when a live Venus, wreathed in smiles and nothing more, emerged from a colossal dove-pie at the banquet-table, and even the humblest vessels provided for the guests' use were of silver-gilt, staggered Rome. "*Deh!*" exclaims the scandalized chronicler, Infessura, "to what uses are put the sacred treasures of the Church!"

The ancient name of Via Lata, the "Broad Street" in which the Colonna houses were situated, is to-day attached —*lucus a non lucendo*—to a narrow lane off the Corso. Beneath the church of S. Maria in Via Lata are remains of the Saepta Julia, built by Agrippa—one of the many great porticoes that stretched, by the end of the fourth century, from the Forum to St. Peter's—as well as of the seventh-century church built amid its ruins. S. Marcello, a few yards further on, has faced the Corso only since 1708. Previously it looked the other way, and in front of it the mutilated body of Rienzi—*bianco come latte ensanguinato*, in the striking words of his chronicler—was hung up by the heels in 1354 to be pelted by the rabble. Within the church is the tomb of Paul II's nephew, the wealthy Cardinal Michiele, who died in S. Angelo from a "white powder" administered by order of Pope Borgia and his son, Cesare.

Just off the Corso, flanking the small Piazza di Pietra, are the lofty columns of the temple dedicated to the deified Hadrian, which must have been of great magnificence. Part of the original ceiling is still in place within the modern Stock Exchange. About ten feet from the ground, on the fourth column from the left, is a crucifix roughly carved by the owner of a house [1] which was built against the columns in the sixteenth century. The high *podium*, which has not long been disinterred, was originally decorated with statues representing the various provinces of the Empire, each in its distinctive national costume. Some of these, of great interest, are to-day in the courtyard of the Conservatori. Surrounding the Hadrianeum was a splendid portico, which,

[1] It is shown in a drawing by Etienne du Perac, reproduced in *A Topographical Study of Rome in* 1586, edited by Thos. Ashby, London, 1916 (Plate XXXII).

being adorned with paintings of the story of the Golden Fleece,[1] was known as the Porticus Argonautarum.

Beyond the Corso on the other side, at the foot of the Quirinal, is the famous Trevi fountain, one of the most successful achievements of the baroque in Rome. The fountain is supplied by the Aqua Vergine, an aqueduct originally constructed by Agrippa for his Baths near the Pantheon, and restored by Sixtus IV. A centuries-old superstition declares that to throw a small coin into the water before leaving Rome ensures the return of the thrower to the Eternal City. Facing the fountain are the remains of a medieval portico. The little church of S. Maria in Trivio, to the left, bears a medieval inscription on the outside wall, declaring that it was founded by Belisarius in expiation for having unjustly caused the death of Pope Silverius on a charge of intriguing with the Goths.

Prior to the making of the Piazza Venezia, the Piazza Colonna was the centre of the modern city, as indeed the area of which it forms part had been the centre of that "Greater Rome" that had grown up in the Campus Martius under the Empire, and particularly under the Antonines. The great Column, then forming part of an entire group of monumental structures, was erected by Marcus Aurelius about A.D. 176 to signalize his campaigns in Bohemia, Hungary and Transylvania. Obviously modelled on that of Trajan, it shows a certain inferiority in execution, counter-balanced, in the opinion of Mrs. Strong, by compacter grouping and a more lively sympathy with human suffering. The curious figure of the storm-god, with streaming hair

[1] The subject was probably chosen to suggest the apotheosis of Hadrian, since the voyage to Colchis was a favourite symbol of the journey to the other world, while, especially in Neo-Pythagorean mysticism, the conquest of the Fleece represented the laying hold on eternal life.

and beard, and arms outspread like mighty wings, records one of the principal incidents of the war—a timely storm, which, while providing water for the thirsty troops, baffled the enemy with hail and thunder. Legend attributes the "miracle" to the prayers of a legion chiefly composed of Christians and henceforth known as the "Thundering," but in point of fact the name was derived merely from the thunder-bolt on their shields—a device borne by the legion perhaps as early as the reign of Augustus.

This piazza and the adjoining Piazza di Montecitorio are a good example of the way in which centuries and civilizations are jumbled together in Rome. The portico of the Associazione della Stampa, though actually Augustan in date, comes from Veii, the ancient Etruscan city that was once Rome's most formidable rival. Memories of Agostino Chigi and the cinquecento confront those of Napoleon and his uncle Cardinal Fesch, who lived as French ambassador in the commonplace-looking palace opposite the Palazzo Chigi. Where a Colonna fortress once rose on the ruins of the voting-place of the Roman tribes (*mons accettorius*, hence Montecitorio), a seventeenth-century palace by the ubiquitous Bernini now houses the Italian Lower Chamber, while in the centre of the square stands an Egyptian obelisk, brought from Heliopolis by Augustus to serve as gnomon for a huge sundial whose site is now partly covered by the Piazza in Lucina.

Leading out of the Piazza di Montecitorio is the Via in Aquiro, whose name is said to commemorate a curious October festival in honour of Mars, when races (*equiriae*) were held, and the winning horse sacrificed to the god. It brings us to the palace—now a cinema!—built in the fifteenth century by Cardinal Domenico Capranica, and one of the earliest Renaissance palaces in Rome. Capranica

THE PANTHEON IN 1667.

himself was among the most winning personalities of his time. Simple and unselfish, he spent little on himself, but much on books, and still more on helping others. He slept for preference on a narrow pallet, and lived chiefly on dry bread, though he had a child-like fondness for sugar. His meals normally consisted of a single dish, or two dishes in the event of a guest. Yet he was neither hermit nor book-worm. He played a leading part at the Council of Basel, where Aeneas Silvius—afterwards Pius II—distinguished himself as his secretary: and it was he who personally led the attack on the house (still partly existing) in the Vicolo delle Ceste which broke up the conspiracy of Stefano Porcari against Nicholas V.

It is with something of a thrill that we emerge on the square of the Pantheon—best preserved of all Roman buildings, thanks to its conversion by Boniface IV in the seventh century into the church of S. Maria ad Martyres. So profoundly was it esteemed in the Middle Ages that it was always mentioned specially by name, together with St. Peter's and the castle of S. Angelo, as one of the edifices which each newly appointed Senator swore to defend. Unfortunately this did not prevent the Barberini Pope, Urban VIII, from melting down the bronze trusses of the portico, together with what were left of the bronze tiles of the roof—most of which had been stolen as far back as 662 by the Emperor Constans II—for his new baldachin in St. Peter's. The three columns on the left of the portico also bear witness, by the emblems carved on their capitals, to the depredations of Urban and of Alexander VII, who substituted these columns for the originals removed by them.

Built, as the conspicuous inscription proclaims, by Agrippa in 27 B.C., the Pantheon was dedicated to the Seven Planetary Divinities, including Mars and Venus, the tutelary

ancestors of Augustus's family, the Julii. Ear-rings made from the pearls of Cleopatra decorated the statue of Venus. A statue of the deified Julius Caesar also stood within the building, while colossal images of Augustus and Agrippa occupied the niches of the portico.

In view of the inscription on the architrave, nobody, up to a quarter of a century ago, had doubted for a moment that the building as it exists was in fact the Pantheon of Agrippa, but the discovery in 1893 that the bricks employed were those of Hadrian led to the general assumption that, while the portico might be Agrippa's, the rotunda had been entirely rebuilt by Hadrian. This opinion, however, is now completely scouted by Signor Giuseppe Cozzo, one of the most eminent of modern Italian engineering authorities, who has made an exhaustive examination of the entire building. According to him, the Pantheon, which had already been restored by Domitian, was again restored by Hadrian in consequence of a fire in the preceding reign, but is none the less substantially the work and design of Agrippa. The original entrance, however, in his opinion, was on the opposite side, where the supposed remains of Agrippa's Baths are really those of a majestic atrium: while the portico, which has no structural or architectural connection with the rotunda, or even with the vestibule, is composed of the columns which formerly adorned the outer order of the old entrance. It has been acutely pointed out that this portico, with its rows of columns divided, as it were, into a central nave with lateral aisles, resembles the plan of an Etruscan temple with its three cellas: while the rotunda, like the Aedes Vestae in the Forum, is a monumental development from the primitive round hut of the Italic tribes. The massive doors, sheathed with bronze, are modern.

Stripped as it is of its marble covering, the exterior of the building hardly prepares one for the overwhelming grandeur of the interior. The starry vault of heaven itself seems suspended above our heads in the immense dome with its star-shaped bosses, and its great central opening—nearly thirty feet in diameter—through which the light streams into every part of the temple. Here, says a German writer quoted by Mrs. Strong, "no image of the gods could dominate the general impression as in other antique temples, no statue projected from the wall into space. The niches reserved for cultus, with the exception of the central recess opposite the entrance, are mantled by columns. For the first time it is space itself that raises up mankind, and assures it of the presence of the gods."

Here, amid the later monuments of the ruling dynasty, is the tomb of Raphael, buried in the Pantheon in accordance with his own desire. Upon it is the celebrated epitaph composed by Cardinal Bembo, which Pope translated and applied to Sir Godfrey Kneller:

> "Living, great Nature feared he might outvie
> Her works; and dying, fears herself to die."

In 1833 the tomb was opened, and Raphael's remains were discovered still intact, including the skull—a sad blow to the Academy of St. Luke, which for more than a century had treasured the skull of some nonentity in the pious belief that it was the skull of the great painter. Here, too, are buried his friend and patron, Cardinal Bibbiena; Bibbiena's niece, Maria, betrothed but never wedded to the artist, who declined to be parted from his beloved Fornarina; Baldassare Peruzzi, Pierin del Vaga, and other famous artists.

During the years immediately following 1870, the

Pantheon was used as a temporary repository for numerous libraries removed by the Government from the confiscated monasteries throughout the country. Unfortunately no supervision was exercised, and the sole caretaker speedily took to selling the manuscripts—many of which were of almost priceless importance—as waste paper. The theft was only discovered when a customer who had bought some butter in the adjacent market found that it had been wrapped in an autograph letter of Christopher Columbus!

Beyond the Pantheon is the church of S. Maria sopra Minerva, the principal church of the Dominican order at Rome. Occupying the site of an earlier and smaller church erected amid the ruins of a temple of Minerva, it was built in 1208 by the same two friar-architects who designed S. Maria Novella at Florence, and is unique among Roman churches in retaining its original Gothic outlines. Though built in that debased form of Gothic which almost alone succeeded in gaining a foothold in Italy, the gloomy interior is not without a certain beauty of its own.

As might be expected in a church built by Florentine architects, the Minerva was a favourite burial-place for Florentines in Rome. Leo X and Clement VII, the two Medici Popes, rest in tombs of pretentious mediocrity in the choir, while near by is the simple effigy of Fra Angelico, who died in 1455 in the adjoining monastery. Here too are the monuments of Neroni Diotisalvi, exiled from Florence as an enemy of the Medici, and of the young Cecco Tornabuoni, nephew of the wealthy banker, Giovanni, for whom Ghirlandaio painted his famous frescoes in S. Maria Novella.

Beneath the high altar lies the body of St. Catharine of Siena, the humble dyer's daughter whose counsel was sought and followed by Popes and princes, and who was not the least

powerful agent in bringing the Papacy back from Avignon to Rome. Most important of all the monuments in the Minerva is the beautiful Carafa chapel, with its frescoes by Filippino Lippi and Raffaellino del Garbo. The noble arch, with its supporting *amorini*, is attributed either to Giuliano da Maiano or to the great Verrocchio himself.

Tempora mutantur! The former Dominican monastery on the left of the church, once the seat of the Inquisition, was converted in 1870 into the Ministery of Public Instruction. It was here that Galileo was first confined, though treated with every consideration, in 1633, prior to making his famous recantation in the church itself. The amusing elephant by Bernini in the middle of the piazza supports a small obelisk of the Pharaoh Haa-ab-Ra—the Hophra of the Old Testament—in whose reign (592–72 B.C.) the Jerusalem of Zedekiah was taken by Nebuchadnezzar II, and the Jews led into exile "by the waters of Babylon." Like its fellow in front of the Pantheon, it formed part of a magnificent double temple of Isis and Sarapis, which once existed in the vicinity.

The Salita dei Crescenzi, on the right of the Piazza del Pantheon, recalls by its name the houses of the powerful family who in the tenth century ruled Rome in defiance alike of Pope and Emperor. A solitary tower yet stands, partly enclosed in the Palazzo Madama. Nowadays the seat of the Senate, the Italian Upper House, this palace dates from the days when Cosimo il Vecchio de' Medici here established his bank in Rome. Several of the rooms still retain their beautiful ceilings and decorations of the fifteenth century.

Among its inhabitants were the two future Popes, Giovanni and Giuliano; Giuliano's alleged son, the evil Alessandro, who as first duke of Florence was murdered by his cousin

Lorenzino; and the youthful Catarina, undreaming as yet of the gloomy destiny that awaited her on the throne of the Valois. By her marriage with Henri II, the palace passed to the Farnese, who added the somewhat heavy baroque façade. It takes its present name from Margaret of Austria —"Madama Margherita," as she was called in Rome— the natural daughter of Charles V, who, on the assassination of her first husband, Alessandro de' Medici, was wedded to Ottavio Farnese, Duke of Parma, the grandson of Paul III.

The Piazza Navona—perhaps the finest square in Rome —occupies the site of a stadium built by Domitian, and indeed the outlines of the original structure are almost perfectly preserved, even to the *spina*, the long central platform round which the chariots ran, with the fountains at either end taking the place of the two *metae*. The Navona was long the principal market of the city, and is still the home of a famous fair on the eve of the Epiphany, when "la Befana," the Mother Goose of Roman folk-lore, distributes toys to all good children—naughty children receiving only a miniature birch! Trumpets, bells and whistles are sold by the hundred, and the pandemonium is almost indescribable. Up to the middle of the last century it was customary, each Saturday in August, to flood the square by stopping the outlet of the fountains. Prelates and princes amused themselves and the populace by driving round and round, up to the axles in water, in coaches specially adorned for the occasion—Bengal lights and music's silver sound still further enlivening the proceedings during the evening.

It was in the Stadium of Domitian that St. Agnes underwent martyrdom, and in the crypt of Borromini's great church is preserved the room—now a chapel—in which she was exposed to public infamy in the outer arcades of

the Stadium, chiefly occupied by women of the lowest reputation. Facing the Church is Bernini's amazing Fountain of the Four Rivers, a record of the long rivalry between the two great exponents of the baroque, which ended in Borromini's insanity and death. The statues surrounding the fountain are supposed to express by their attitudes an exaggerated horror of Borromini's towering façade, coupled with alarm lest it fall and crush them: though surely it would be hard to imagine a more daring *tour de force* than Bernini's own feat in supporting the entire weight of his great obelisk upon a void. Curiously enough, though this obelisk is contemporary with Domitian, it was not originally erected in his Stadium. It was found beside the Via Appia in the circus of Maxentius, who had had it transported from another part of the Campus Martius.

The Pamfili palace, beside the church, was once the residence of Donna Olimpia Maidalchini, the sister-in-law and evil genius of Innocent X, who was entirely under her influence. Nobody, from a cardinal or ambassador to the humblest petitioner, could approach the Pope till Donna Olimpia—"olim pia, nunc impia," to quote the witty gibe of Pasquino—had received a substantial bribe: no business could be carried through, from opening a shop to electing a bishop, without the previous contribution of an exorbitant sum to the already bursting coffers of the harpy of the Vatican. On Innocent's death, she even carried off the small box beneath his bed in which he kept his money, and with inconceivable meanness pleaded her "poverty" as an excuse for leaving the dead Pope to receive what was practically a pauper's funeral.

South of the piazza, in what was once the heart of medieval Rome, the houses of the Massimi formed, until 1527, practically a quarter of their own on both sides of the old

Via Papalis, which is to-day partly represented by the modern Corso Vittorio Emanuele. The ruin of the quarter in the sack of Rome spared the stern old palace, its austerity hardly relieved by the faded paintings on its façade, that still faces the little Via della Posta Vecchia. Here it was that in 1467 two German printers, Schweinheym and Pannartz, were welcomed by Pietro Massimo, and set up the first printing-press in Rome.

The splendid cinquecento palace, with its curious curving façade, which to-day fronts the Corso, was built by Baldassarre Peruzzi to replace an older structure, destroyed in the sack, whose portico had long given the distinguishing name of *alle Colonne* to the branch of the family inhabiting it—a name which, though still in use, is applied nowadays rather to the building than to its owners. As well in the present portico as in the exquisite first court, with its loggia and nympheum, Peruzzi seems to have reproduced, though on a nobler scale, the leading characteristics of the earlier palace. To the first court succeeds a second, richly decorated in the seventeenth century, and still containing two singular columns, probably of the ancient portico. The vista of the two courtyards seen from the entrance to the palace is fascinating. It was in this Palazzo Massimi alle Colonne that St. Philip Neri, on March 16, 1583, temporarily resuscitated a boy in whom life had already been pronounced to be extinct. The actual room is now a chapel, where a commemorative service is publicly held on every anniversary of the miracle.

The princely family of the Massimi is said to be derived from the celebrated Fabius Maximus Cunctator, the opponent of Hannibal. When Napoleon once asked if it were true, Prince Massimi shrugged his shoulders. "I could not prove it, of course, sire," he replied, "but such has been the family

tradition for the last thousand years." The pomp maintained by the family in the past may be judged from the fact that in the reign of Leo X the palace servitors numbered one hundred and sixty, not to mention the army of retainers dwelling on the extensive Massimi properties in the Campagna. In 1585 Lelio Massimi, then head of the clan, married a woman of more beauty than reputation. Five of the six sons by his first wife avenged their mother's memory by the murder of their stepmother, and were solemnly cursed by the old prince. Not unnaturally, perhaps, considering their own character and that of the times, all five died violent deaths: only the sixth, who had taken no part in the crime, surviving to carry on the direct line.

Hereabouts raged the last and fiercest of the street-fighting between the Guelfs and the Imperialists in 1312, when mail-clad bishops and abbots fought and fell round the barricades side by side with knights and men-at-arms. The supporters of Henry of Luxembourg stormed the defences of the Campo de' Fiori, sacked and burned the houses of the Orsini, and swept on, with shouts of exultation, as far as the Ponte S. Angelo, where, however, an overwhelming sortie from the castle drove them headlong back with heavy loss. The echoes of the struggle, by which Henry's last hopes of reaching St. Peter's were annihilated, still seem to ring in our ears as we cross the Piazza S. Pantaleo, and, passing the Braschi palace with its splendid staircase, reach the small open space over which presides the now silent genius of Pasquino.

This celebrated, if battered group, a Greek work of the fourth century B.C., probably representing Menelaus with the body of Patroclus, was discovered in 1501, and speedily became the principal mouthpiece of Roman public opinion. Named, it is said, after a witty cobbler who had his shop

near by, Pasquino was made to carry on satiric dialogues with other statues in Rome (especially with his "friend" Marforio, now in the Capitoline Museum) by means of lampoons attached to the pedestal of the group. Perhaps the most brutal of these was composed by Sannazaro against Alexander VI when he had the Tiber dragged for the body of his murdered son, the Duke of Gandia.

"Fisher of men?" Aye, thou indeed art one!
See how with nets thou fishest for thy son!

The spoliations of Napoleon gave rise to a neat, if untranslatable pun:

I Francesi son tutti ladri.—
Non tutti, ma Buona parte!

Indeed, no personage, however exalted, no subject, however sacred, was safe from Pasquino's envenomed shafts, and one of his last recorded epigrams was at the expense of Pius IX, when promulgating the dogma of Papal infallibility:

When Eve ate of the fatal Tree,
Christ was made Man to set men free.
His Vicar (which is surely odd)
To make men slaves, makes himself God![1]

So infuriated was Adrian VI at the statue's irreverences that he threatened to throw Pasquino into the Tiber, but was told that matters would then be worse than ever, as all the frogs in the river would begin croaking pasquinades! Sixtus V, who had ennobled his sister, a lady admittedly of

[1] *Quando Eva morse, e morder fece il pomo,*
Gesu per salvar l'uom si fece l'uomo;
Ma il Vicario di Crist, il Nono Pio,
Per render schiavo l'uom si vuol far Dio.

lowly origin, was decidedly "not amused" when Pasquino informed Rome that he was unable to get his shirt washed because his washerwoman had been made a Princess. The Pope offered the anonymous author a substantial reward to reveal his identity, promising that his life should be spared. The humorist incautiously came forward, and was duly given the reward—but with the trifling disadvantage of losing his right hand. "I promised only to spare his life," Sixtus replied inflexibly to all remonstrances.

One is tempted to follow the picturesque Via del Governo Vecchio, with its remains of ancient palaces, to the Banchi Nuovi, where Cellini had his workshop and Imperia her *salon*; to visit the great Chiesa Nuova founded by St. Philip Neri, or the Gabrielli palace, where once towered the great Orsini fortress of Monte Giordano. Let us, however, make our way to the graceful little church of S. Maria della Pace, founded by Sixtus IV, where newly married couples repair to pray that they may live harmoniously together. The custodian unveils for the visitor the great treasure of the church—the famous Sibyls [1] which Raphael painted for Agostino Chigi, and which it is instructive to compare with Michelangelo's previous treatment of the same subject in the Sixtine. Baldassarre Peruzzi is also seen at his best in this church, and it is interesting to know that the marbles which decorate the second chapel on the left of the nave once formed part of the great temple of Jupiter on the Capitol. The cloister is one of Bramante's earliest works in Rome.

A network of lanes, thoroughly medieval in character, brings us to the Piazza Sanguigna, where an ancient tower still recalls the residences of the once powerful Sanguigni family. It was here that Cellini revenged himself on a soldier who had killed his brother, driving his dagger so

[1] The Phrygian Sibyl is said to be a portrait of Imperia.

deeply into his victim's neck that he could not withdraw it. Some Spaniards who saw the deed pursued him to the Medici palace (Madama), but retired with profuse apologies on learning that the gentleman had merely been settling a private score!

The conditions prevailing in Rome in the Middle Ages, or even in the late Renaissance, seem almost inconceivable. Think for a moment, for example, of the funeral of Cardinal Guillaume d'Estouteville hard by at S. Agostino [1] in 1483, when the Augustinians and the monks of S. Maria Maggiore fought hand to hand in the church for the gold brocade in which the corpse was enveloped. They belaboured each other furiously with the funeral torches, and, in fact, with any weapon that chanced to be within reach, till the victorious Augustinians succeeded in dragging the body into the sacristy, where it was forthwith plundered without further hindrance!

Beyond the Palazzo Altemps, built for the truculent Count Girolamo Riario, whose armed retainers once lounged in the lane still called the Vicolo de' Soldati, we reach, close to the river-bank, the Albergo dell' Orso, or "Bear Inn," so called originally from the arms of the Orsini, who dominated all the neighbourhood. The oldest of all Roman inns, it is said to have afforded lodging to Dante in 1300. It was still one of the best inns in Rome when Montaigne lodged there two hundred years later, and had not lost its eminence even in 1786, when Goethe, arriving for the first time in Rome, took up a temporary abode at the sign of the Bear.

The Via di Monte Brianzo leads to the huge palace,

[1] The church contains Raphael's famous "Isaiah" (in which Michelangelo's influence is obvious) as well as a marble Madonna and Child by Sansovino—one of the most popular cult-images in Rome.

or rather palaces, of the Borghese Pope, Paul V, and his descendants—once the wealthiest of all Roman princely families. The palace on the left of the piazza was inhabited solely by retainers and dependants: the central building contained the stables and coach-houses, while the main palace, on the right, was for the use of the family, who still inhabit part of it. Here were given those dazzling entertainments which Stendhal considered superior to those of Napoleon himself, whose sister, the gay and beautiful Pauline, married Prince Camillo Borghese. Every visitor to Rome knows Pauline's portrait-statue by Canova in the splendid Villa (now a museum) which Cardinal Scipione Borghese built for his residence beyond the walls. "Didn't you mind?" asked a female friend, somewhat scandalized by the portrait's exiguity of costume. "Oh no," explained Pauline naïvely, "there was a fire in the room."

Near the church of S. Girolamo degli Schiavoni, in the Via di Ripetta, the body of the Duke of Gandia, murdered by his own brother, Cesare, was flung into the Tiber. A charcoal-burner afterwards gave evidence that about one o'clock in the morning of June 15, 1497, he had seen some men emerge stealthily from the street beside the Slavonian hospital, and make a sign, upon which there appeared a man riding a white horse, with a dead body slung across its crupper. The attendants took the corpse, and cast it into the river: the cloak floated, but they threw stones upon it to make it sink. He was asked why he had not reported the matter to the authorities. "In my time," he replied, "I have seen probably a hundred corpses thrown into the river by night, but nobody has ever troubled about any of them before."

Covered with dagger-wounds, its hands tied, the body was dragged out of the Tiber, and the same evening was

escorted past the fatal spot by two hundred torch-bearers to its burial in the church of the Popolo. Gloomy and ruinous, the mausoleum of Augustus—now concealed by the surrounding houses—looked down on the funeral procession as once it had looked down upon the last rites by which the founder of the Empire was laid to rest. As originally built, the huge structure was circular, of white marble, crowned with a conical grove of cypresses: before the entrance, on the south, stood two obelisks, one of which is now in the Piazza del Quirinale, the other in the Piazza dell' Esquilino. One by one, the aged Emperor had seen those whom he loved or whom he had destined as his successor, precede him to the tomb: and recent excavations have brought to light, besides the funeral urn of Nerva, a precious fragment of marble inscribed with the names of Octavia, the sister of Augustus, and of her young son, Marcellus, whose untimely death Virgil commemorated in lines whose pathos caused Octavia to faint when she first heard them recited.

Plundered by the Goths, converted into a fortress by the Colonna, stormed and ravaged by the insurgent Romans, the ancient mausoleum, which had sheltered the ashes of the first Emperor, received in 1354 those of the last of the Tribunes, when the mangled corpse of Rienzi was burned here by the Jews on a pyre of thistles. "Fu redotto in polvere, non ne rimase cica," [1] says the chronicler. The vicissitudes of the monument became ever stranger with the passing of the years. Turned into a garden in the sixteenth century, it was used successively for bull-fights, for the display of fireworks, as an open-air theatre and as a circus. Completely abandoned, it served for the modelling of the colossal equestrian statue of Victor Emanuel which adorns

[1] "It was reduced to powder, not a scrap of it was left."

his monument,[1] and finally, in 1907, was converted to its present use as one of the finest concert-halls in Europe.

The Augusteum was merely the most imposing of innumerable other tombs which lined the old Flaminian Way. Where the modern Corso emerges between its twin churches into the huge Piazza del Popolo was probably the site of the funeral pyre of the great dictator, Sulla, who had directed that his body should be burned—not buried, as was the custom of his family, the Cornelii—lest his enemies should subject it to the same contumely as he himself had inflicted on that of his old rival, Marius. A little beyond was the family tomb of the Domitii, in which were laid the ashes of Nero: remains of the monument were still visible in the fifteenth century. Early in the Middle Ages a small chapel was erected near by to protect belated travellers against the ghost of the terrible Emperor. Destroyed in the sack of 1084, it was rebuilt by Paschal II, who cut down an ancient walnut-tree haunted by swarms of demons disguised as crows! In the thirteenth century it was enlarged and converted into a parish church under the name of S. Maria del Popolo, i.e. of the "populus" or parish. Such was the romantic origin of the present church, with its frescoes by Pinturicchio and Raphael, its paintings by Caravaggio, its stained glass by Guillaume de Marsillat, and its monuments by Bregno, Sansovino and Bernini.

The Porta Flaminia—now Porta del Popolo—naturally came into existence only with the erection of the Aurelian wall in the third century, and has been more than once rebuilt. Before the days of railways, it was the principal gate by which travellers from the north entered the city: Charlemagne and Christina of Sweden, Luther and Loyola,

[1] The dimensions of the statue may be judged from the fact that a dinner for twenty persons was given inside the horse after the casting.

Milton and Montaigne, have all passed through it. In 1494, while Alexander VI cowered in terror in S. Angelo, Charles VIII of France, followed by his army, rode in, with lance in rest, and clothed in complete armour, to take up his quarters in the former palace of Pope Barbo. The great obelisk in the centre of the piazza was placed here by Sixtus V. Thirteen centuries before the present era Rameses II, the supposed oppressor of the Hebrews, erected it at Heliopolis, whence Augustus had it transported to Rome and set up in the Circus Maximus.

High above the square rise the monumental slopes of the Pincian hill, still justifying its ancient name of "the hill of gardens." Its present name is a reminiscence of the family of the Pincii, who had a villa there, as also did the Acilii Glabriones, noblest among the noble families of Imperial Rome, and one of the first to embrace Christianity. The southern slopes of the hill, from the Sta. Trinità and the Via Sistina to the Via Due Macelli, was occupied by the luxurious palace and gardens of Lucullus, soldier and sybarite. Valerius Asiaticus, owner of the gardens in the reign of Claudius, was here compelled to kill himself by the covetous intrigues of the Empress Messalina. Here, in Claudius's absence, she celebrated, amid wild scenes of Bacchic revelry, her adulterous union with her lover Silius, whom she had destined for the throne: and here, on the failure of her schemes, she paid the penalty with her blood.

CHAPTER XIII

FROM THE VELABRUM TO THE PORTA TRIUMPHALIS, AND BEYOND

BETWEEN the Palatine and the Capitoline lies the valley anciently known as the Velabrum, through which once ran the Vicus Tuscus, connecting the Forum Romanum with the Forum Boarium. The place of the Vicus Tuscus is now taken by the Via S. Teodoro, named from the little old round church of St. Theodore, which stands in one of the three courts of a large store and market for grain built by Augustus's minister and son-in-law, Agrippa. The church existed at least as early as the days of Gregory the Great, and the apsidal mosaic of Christ and four saints though restored may well be also of the sixth century. It was long the custom of Roman wet-nurses to bring their ailing charges to be blessed and strengthened by "S. Toto"—possibly from some vague, traditional memory of the long-vanished Lupercal, the grotto, once close by, in which Romulus and Remus were supposed to have been nourished by the She-wolf.

The church belongs to a private confraternity of which few foreigners, and indeed not many Italians—at least outside of Rome—have ever heard, and whose service on Good Friday morning—the only day in the year when the church is open to a visit—is unique among the Easter ceremonies of the capital. Founded in 1729 for the encouragement of religion, the Confraternity of the Sacred Heart is recruited exclusively from the most aristocratic Roman

families, and devotes itself nowadays chiefly to unostentatious charity. Its members are generally known as the "Sacconi" (sacks), for their costume on formal occasions consists of a coarse robe of sackcloth, with a hood completely covering the face. Two holes only are left for the eyes, above which is roughly embroidered a skull, while a heavy knotted rope encircles the waist. The same costume serves as a shroud when the body of one of the Sacconi is laid by his former companions coffinless in the grave.

Like a procession of spectres, the hooded forms of the Brothers glide barefooted into the dim little church, paved with the tomb-slabs of bygone Sacconi, and fling themselves face down before the as yet unlighted altar, on which stands the shrouded figure of the Crucified. Still stranger is the scene when the image of Christ, now uncovered, is laid as if in state upon the chancel steps, and clergy, Sacconi and congregation come forward, kneeling, to kiss the wounded feet. Once again the Sacconi prostrate themselves while the Host, covered with a napkin, is solemnly taken from its mimic sepulchre above the side altar: and then, candle in hand, they escort it as it is carried round the church beneath a canopy, to be finally unveiled and held aloft for the veneration of the kneeling throng. Later in the day the Sacconi go in barefoot procession through the streets to S. Lorenzo in Damaso. A similar procession is made on Ash Wednesday to S. Sabina on the Aventine.

In a small, picturesque square, as though averse from sight or sound of modernity, is the ancient church of S. Giorgio in Velabro, founded perhaps in the sixth century. During the careful restorations which have given back to the church its original aspect, one of the old windows was revealed, still filled with its small panes, not of glass but mica. The thirteenth-century frescoes in the tribune are attributed to

Pietro Cavallini. Attiguous to the church is a small arch, erected, as the inscription shows, by the silversmiths and cattle-merchants of the Forum Boarium, or cattle-market, in honour of Septimius Severus and his sons, Geta and Caracalla. Naturally the figure of Geta has been obliterated from the reliefs, but we can still see those of Severus and his wife, Julia Domna, represented in the act of sacrificing.

The triumphal arch opposite—erroneously called the Arch of Janus—stood at a cross-roads, and hence has four openings. Erected by Constantine, it doubtless served, rather like some of our own market crosses, as a convenient and sheltered spot for merchants and buyers when discussing business. Originally it seems to have terminated in a pyramid, destroyed by the Frangipani, who converted the arch into a tower. Near by, a narrow lane spanned by a series of low brick arches leads to a section, still in use, of the Cloaca Maxima.

Beyond the so-called arch of Janus lies the ancient Forum Boarium, in the midst of which stands the extremely interesting church of S. Maria in Cosmedin—a name derived from a Greek word meaning "adornment." Like S. Giorgio, S. Teodoro and S. Maria Antiqua, it belonged in early times to the Greek monks who had fled to Rome to escape the persecution of the Iconoclasts. It is popularly known as the "Bocca della Verità" or "Mouth of Truth," from the curious circular cover of a sewer, sculptured with a mask of Oceanus, in the porch. In the Middle Ages it was believed that Virgil, who was regarded as a great enchanter, had wrought the mask in such wise that a perjurer who had previously placed his hand within the marble mouth would be unable to withdraw it.

Beside the church, up to the eighth century, stood a colossal altar of Hercules—one of the oldest monuments

of classical Rome. Adrian I (772–95), in order to enlarge the church, demolished the altar on the pretext that it was threatening to collapse: the absurdity of the excuse is evident from the fact that the demolition occupied a large number of men for a whole year! Only the great platform of tufa blocks was left, from which the present crypt is partly excavated. The round temple of the god, erected by Pompey, was still in existence in the fifteenth century, and in it was found a gilt-bronze statue of Hercules which is now in the Conservatori Museum.

It was, perhaps, towards the end of the fifth century that the church found its beginning in a small oratory formed out of part of a large rectangular hall previously used by the *prefectus annonae*, the important official in charge of the corn supply. On entering the church, we see the columns of this hall still half sunk in the entrance wall and the side wall to the right, and continuing into the sacristy. Before its prolongation by Adrian I, the church was rather less than half its present length. Carefully restored, it is, perhaps, more suggestive of the Middle Ages than any church in Rome—the ancient columns of the nave, obviously plundered from many different buildings; the flat wooden ceiling; the small, dim, round-headed windows set high up in walls that still show here and there traces of the frescoes with which they once glowed.

The magnificent pavement in *opus Alexandrinum*, the beautiful choir with its two ambones, and the episcopal throne, were commissioned in the twelfth century by Cardinal Alfanus, Camerarius to Pope Callixtus II, and are among the earliest works of their kind in Rome. The Paschal candlestick is of the thirteenth century, while the characteristic ciborium above the altar—which is made of an ancient Roman bath—was given by Cardinal Caetani,

nephew of Boniface VIII, about the year 1300. The pavement below the altar is of the time of Adrian I, and it is interesting to observe the contrast between this, so classical in its simplicity, and the intricacy and splendour of the medieval remainder. Notable, also, is the font—originally, it would seem, an ancient mixing-bowl which was perhaps taken from the temple, once near by, of Liber, Libera and Ceres.

Here, as in various other Roman churches, still remain some of the standard weights, of black granite, which, kept in pagan temples for the convenience of the public, were removed to the churches on the suppression of paganism. There, in course of time, their real purpose forgotten, they were thought to have been used in the slaying of the martyrs, or to possess the property of distinguishing precious metals from counterfeits. Within the sacristy is an important fragment, representing the offering of the Magi, of the mosaic decoration from the chapel erected to the Virgin in old St. Peter's by John VII (705–7).

The central portal is an eleventh-century work by one John of Venice, who has obviously made a conscientious attempt to copy the classic remains which he saw in Rome. The result is amusing, though not conspicuously successful. On the right of the doorway is the unpretending tomb of Cardinal Alfanus—an obvious link between the *arcosolia* of the catacombs and the ever more elaborately recessed monuments of the thirteenth–fifteenth centuries. "Knowing that all things pass away," runs the rather touching inscription above, "Alfanus made this tomb for himself, that he might not be utterly forgotten."

Concealed among the squalid modern buildings which adjoin the church in the Via de' Greci are some remains of the ninth-century palace of Nicholas I, enlarged

and fortified by Cardinal Caetani. The restoration of this very interesting monument has recently been mooted.

The graceful little circular temple on the opposite side of the piazza is not, of course, the temple of Vesta, as it is often called, but was more probably dedicated to the Sun. Of Republican origin, it was rebuilt by Augustus, and was formerly covered by a cupola. Beneath the floor of the cella is a vault or *favissa*—a kind of store-room for objects connected with the cult—which occasionally inspires imaginative custodians with thrilling stories of immured Vestals! The beautiful rectangular temple beyond is in almost perfect preservation: it is built of tufa and travertine, which was covered in antiquity with a coating of stucco. It dates from the early part of the first century B.C., and is therefore one of the oldest existing buildings in Rome, but to what divinity it was dedicated is unknown—certainly not, as once believed, to Fortuna.

Oddly enough, the building facing it, adorned with fragments of ancient sculpture, is probably the oldest surviving example in Rome of medieval domestic architecture. Built perhaps as early as the tenth or eleventh century by a certain Nicholas Crescentius of whom nothing is known, it formed part of a fortress, known as the Monzone, commanding the Aemilian bridge, or Ponte dei Senatori, as it was called in the Middle Ages. The sole surviving arch of this bridge, known as the Ponte Rotto, is chiefly a restoration of the seventeenth century. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries this quarter was largely occupied by the houses and palaces of the powerful Pierleoni family, which, though originally Jewish, actually placed one of its members on the Papal throne as Anacletus II. Remains of these palaces, with their graceful ogival windows, still look down on the narrow lanes beyond the house of Crescentius.

Beneath the church of S. Nicolà in Carcere have been excavated important remains of three temples. They evidently formed a single compact group, and are believed to have been dedicated to Juno, Juventus and Dis Pater, that of Juno being the central and largest temple. The church takes its name of "in Carcere" from a Papal prison which existed here in the early Middle Ages.

The Piazza Montanara, where up to the end of the last century the peasants from the hills regularly came to offer themselves for hire, is the ancient Forum Holitorium, or vegetable market, which was connected by the Vicus Jugarius with the Forum Romanum. Here we find ourselves once more in the Campus Martius, since the Forum Holitorium lay just outside the "Servian" wall, which was pierced hereabouts by several gateways, including the Porta Triumphalis, which was opened only to admit the triumphant entrance of a victorious general and his army. Remains of a large portico, once, probably, crowded by vendors and their stalls, can plainly be seen projecting from the house-walls on the east side of the piazza, while a portion of another and earlier portico is visible in the neighbouring Via della Bufala, where it had formed part of a medieval house.

Towering above the piazza is the great theatre begun by Caesar and completed by Augustus, who dedicated it to his ill-fated nephew, Marcellus. During the inaugural performance, Suetonius tells us, the Emperor's chair gave way and precipitated him to the ground, but fortunately no great harm was done. Under Vespasian, who restored the stage, the theatre enjoyed a wonderful "season" of plays and concerts, the leading performers receiving prizes to a total value of several thousand pounds. By the third century, however, the shows of the Colosseum and the Circus had practically killed music and drama at Rome, and the great

theatres were consequently abandoned, and even plundered for building materials—an interesting point, since it shows that the mischievous spoliations of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance merely followed the bad example of the ancients themselves. In medieval times the theatre suffered the usual fate of being turned into a castle, held in turn by Pierleoni, Savelli and Orsini, and indeed the bears of the Orsini still guard the gateway of the palace—now the property of the Duke of Sermoneta.

The injuries which the building has suffered during centuries of warfare and vandalism are only too obvious, but the municipality, fortunately, has taken in hand the task of freeing the exterior from the grimy shops and mean dwellings that clustered, barnacle-like, in and against it. Near the Portico of Octavia the work of demolition has brought to light an interesting medieval house and loggia, which are now being subjected to careful restoration.

The once magnificent Porticus which Augustus dedicated to his sister Octavia is now part of what was formerly the Ghetto, where, from the reign of the gloomy fanatic, Paul IV, to the reign of Pius IX, the Jews were compelled to dwell, herded together, in degradation and oppression. It was surrounded by high walls, whose gates were rigorously locked at nightfall, while, by an aggravation of tyranny, the wages of the guards were exacted from the Jews themselves. Close to the Ponte Quattro Capi the little church of S. Gregorio, which once faced the entrance, still bears above its doorway a picture of the Crucifixion, with an inscription in Latin and Hebrew from Isaiah lxv. 2. "I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people, which walketh in a way that was not good, after their own thoughts." On Sundays they were forcibly driven into S. Angelo in

Pescheria to be preached at, while overseers with whips stood by to lash them if they seemed insufficiently attentive.[1]

It was on the wall of this S. Angelo "in the Fish-Market" that Rienzi displayed a large allegorical picture by which he wished to arouse his fellow-citizens to a sense of Rome's tyrant-ridden condition, and from its doors in 1347 he led his followers to seize the Capitol and establish—for a brief moment—the "Buono Stato." The approach to the church lies through the fore-hall of the Porticus Octaviae, where the brick archway in front was substituted in the Middle Ages for the original columns. The portico itself, remains of which have been revealed by the excavations connected with the theatre of Marcellus, was almost entirely rebuilt under Severus and Caracalla. Standing on a stepped platform, it contained two temples of Jupiter and Juno respectively, and we learn from Pliny that the statues of the two divinities were accidentally placed each in the temple intended for the other, and that the augurs in consequence forbade them to be transposed. The gods, in fact, had obviously chosen their own habitations.

Besides the temples, there were a Greek and Latin library, and a large hall for public meetings, not to mention innumerable works of art. The invaluable Pliny also tells us that the sculptors entrusted with the decoration were wealthy amateurs, who asked only the right to inscribe their names on the building. This not unreasonable request was, however, refused them. Accordingly, as their names were Sauros and Batrachos, which mean "lizard" and "frog," they ingeniously carved a lizard and a frog on the volutes of the capitals. Curiously enough, there is just such a

[1] Evelyn visited the Ghetto in 1644, and was invited, as a special privilege, to witness a circumcision.

capital in the church of S. Lorenzo fuori—quite probably taken from this very portico.

Immediately to the left of the church is a medieval house, with a doorway made up of ancient fragments, and remains of an exterior staircase at the back. It is probably at least contemporary with Cola di Rienzi, whose own birthplace was not far away. Amusingly characteristic of the spirit of the New Learning is the fifteenth-century mansion, further on, of the Humanist, Lorenzo Manilio, with its ostentatious inscriptions in Greek and Latin, and "Have Roma" (Hail, O Rome!) carved above the windows. Close by, another side of the Renaissance is illustrated by the gloomy palace of the Cenci, where the festive vicinity of a popular restaurant forms an odd contrast to the tragic memories of that somewhat overrated heroine, Beatrice, and her abominable father, Count Francesco.

At the corner of the Via del Pianto is the massive palace of the Princes Santacroce. The family claims direct descent from Valerius Publicola, who assisted Decimus Brutus in expelling the Tarquins: but the historical fact that it was a Cardinal Santacroce who introduced tobacco into Italy constitutes another, and perhaps a stronger, claim on their country's gratitude. Like that of most noble Roman families, their history has been a stormy one. In 1480 Prospero Santacroce stabbed Pietro Margano at the door of his own palace, a tower and gateway of which still remain in the Piazza Margana: another member of the family fell into the hands of Cesare Borgia, and purchased his life for 20,000 ducats: a third, Antonio, commanded the artillery of S. Angelo during the siege of 1527. In 1600 the cold-blooded murder of the Marchesa Santacroce by her own son decided the fate of their relatives, the Cenci, who had just been convicted of a similar crime. In the small church

of S. Maria in Publicolis—not often open—are numerous interesting tombs of the Santacroce, including a truly delightful monument of the seventeenth century. It bears a remarkable resemblance to an opera-box, wherein, with an air of being thoroughly at ease in Zion, a periwig-pated nobleman and his wife sit, programme—I mean, prayer-book—in hand, gazing somewhat patronizingly at the st—altar.

The Fountain of the Tortoises, which lends enchantment to the little Piazza Mattei, is believed to have been designed by Giacomo della Porta, and is easily supreme even in this city of many fountains. Close by is the imposing palace which Maderno built in the sixteenth century for the Mattei, a branch of the ancient Trasteverine family of the Papareschi, of whom Innocent II was one. The courtyard of the Palazzo Mattei is one of the most picturesque in Rome. Both this and the adjoining Palazzo Caetani occupy part of the site of the huge Circus Flaminius, built in 221 B.C., and surpassed in size only by the Circus Maximus. Its great importance consisted less in the spectacles given there than in its use as a market-place and a centre for religious and political assemblies, especially of the plebeians. The romantically named Via delle Botteghe Oscure, or Street of the Dark Shops, which runs in front of the Palazzo Caetani, marks the line of the outer arcades of the immense structure, which were occupied by shops in the Middle Ages, and most probably for centuries before that.

In proximity to the great Circus was the remarkable temple area recently laid bare opposite the Argentina theatre. The temples, four in number, stand within a species of sacred precinct, enclosed on the north and west by a massive wall of tufa which extends, however, considerably beyond the excavated area. Monumental archways in the northern

wall afforded communication with the Agrippan constructions towards the Pantheon, while along the inner side of the wall, perhaps even in Republican times, ran a portico containing shops. Another portico faced the temples on the east, while on the west was a third, belonging to the magnificent group of edifices built by Pompey. This last portico, in the fifth or sixth century, was evidently converted into a public latrine, and about the same time, possibly, was built the square hall of brick, whose purpose is still a mystery, immediately in front of the temple nearest the Corso.

The earliest of the four temples—the third from the Corso—dates from about the middle of the fourth century B.C., and was clearly the most deeply venerated of the entire group. Next in antiquity—about a century later—come the two nearest the Corso: the fourth and largest, towards the Largo Arenula, was erected only in the last century of the Republic. This last temple, not yet completely excavated, is built of travertine, whereas the other three are of tufa, which was formerly coated with stucco. At some time or another, the damage wrought by fire or earthquake led to the old tufa pavement being covered with a new paving of travertine, while at the same time modifications were made in the temples themselves. The most important change was effected in the round temple, which has a rectangular porch, with remains of an altar conspicuous on the steps. The columns of its outer colonnade were now connected, as we can see, by a wall, thus enlarging the cella, and changing the form of the temple.

Under the Empire, the temples underwent a singular transformation. For some (as yet) unexplained reason, all four were joined by, or rather embedded in, a large brick structure, only the steps and pronaos of each projecting from the long brick façade. Last of all, evidently, the whole

area was again—and this time irreparably—injured by fire and earthquake, perhaps the great earthquake of 847.

Up to the present, all attempts to identify any of the temples must be regarded as hypothetical, despite the discovery of various fragments of statues, including those of a statue of Hercules and the head of a female deity—perhaps Venus. Especially important are the portions of a colossal statue—whether male or female is uncertain—found near the round temple. As this is the only temple containing a base large enough to support a statue of such proportions, it may well have belonged there. Professor Marchetti-Longhi suggests that it represents Juno, and is a marble copy of a chryselephantine original by Polycletus, of the fifth century B.C.[1]

Not less interesting is the temple nearest the Corso, formerly immured in the church of S. Nicolà de' Cesarini. The demolition of the church has revealed the remains, not only of the temple, but of the curious little early church of S. Nicolà de Calcarario, built in part of the ruined pagan sanctuary. The name, which means "of the limekiln," speaks only too eloquently of the malevolent activities of the medieval lime-burners: indeed, the entire district was known in the Middle Ages as "il Calcarario," while the adjoining street of S. Nicolà de' Cesarini was formerly called Via de Calcarariis. Yet another link with the Middle Ages is the old tower of the Boccamazzi family that overlooks the south-east angle of the area. In the twelfth century it was called *Turris Papito* or Torre Papetto—"Little Pope Tower"—a name which, in Marchetti-Longhi's opinion, is an allusion to the Pierleoni Pope, the small and swarthy Anacletus II, who had rebuilt S. Nicolà de Calcarario.

In the Palazzo della Valle, opposite the great church of

[1] There are, however, reasons for believing that this temple was dedicated to Hercules the Guardian (*Custos*).

S. Andrea, lived in the seventeenth century the celebrated Pietro della Valle, who took to travelling, as heroes of fiction take to lion-shooting, to still the pangs of unrequited love. The cure was apparently successful, for at Bagdad he married a Syrian lady, and, when she died at Ispahan, he carried her corpse about with him in his wanderings, together with a beautiful Georgian girl whom his wife had adopted as a child. After a series of adventures in Persia, Mesopotamia, Arabia and India, he eventually reached Rome once more —still accompanied by the corpse, which he now buried, and the Georgian, whom he married. Some temporary unpleasantness was occasioned by his stabbing Urban VIII's coachman, who had slighted one of his servants, in front of the Quirinal palace, and in fact of the Pope himself, who was just about to bless the crowd from the balcony: but the good offices of Cardinal Barberini smoothed the matter over, and he settled down in Rome, to beget fourteen children in succession: after which the Georgian retired to a better, and less strenuous, world, followed, not long afterwards, by Pietro himself.

The church of S. Andrea contains the tombs, almost exactly alike, of the two Piccolomini Popes, Pius II and Pius III. In the little piazza beside it the statue of an unknown Roman orator confronts us pallidly like the ghost of Caesar, murdered in the Curia of Pompey, a few yards away. The Curia was connected with the magnificent theatre built by Pompey in 55 B.C., of which the lines of the auditorium are clearly preserved in the curve of the Vicolo della Grotta Pinta. In the Middle Ages a strong fortress of the Orsini rose upon the ruins: and it was in the little church of S. Maria della Grotta Pinta—now a carpenter's store—that Gianpaolo Orsini, Duke of Bracciano, married in 1585 the beautiful Vittoria Accoramboni,

having murdered her husband and his own wife in order to do so.

A sinister-seeming archway on the right of the little church leads to the Piazza del Biscione, where the great gilt-bronze Hercules now in the Vatican Rotonda was found in 1864. Beyond it lies the Campo de' Fiori, once a meadow extending to the bank of the Tiber, but long since a "field of flowers" in name alone. By the end of the fourteenth century it was already a busy centre of civic life —and of death, too, since it was continually the scene of public executions: as indeed the statue of Giordano Bruno, burned at the stake in 1600, bears witness. In 1486 more than two thousand people joined in a riot in the Campo in consequence of the murder, by a jealous rival, of a young man of the Sanguigni family. Nowadays the Campo is best seen on Wednesday mornings, when the weekly fair extends to all the neighbouring streets, and one wanders happily among fresh fish or first editions, antique bronzes or old iron, copes, coins or cabbages. Fair day in the Campo is invariably amusing, but bargains such as collectors dream of are, alas! growing smaller each day and beautifully less.

Facing the little Piazza Capo di Ferro is the curiously ornate front of the Palazzo Spada, built in 1540, and now the seat of the Council of State. The palace was restored by Borromini, who built the amusing Gallery in the garden-court. From the library windows one beholds what appears to be a long and imposing arched gallery, beyond which stands the colossal statue of a warrior. As a matter of fact, the whole thing is an ingenious trick of perspective: the gallery is only a few feet in length, while the colossus turns out to be a mere statuette! This device—the baroque in a playful mood—was adopted for a grander purpose

by Bernini when designing his noble Scala Regia at the Vatican.

The long corridor leading to the Council apartments, with their beautiful frescoes, is ornamented with a series of antique reliefs, mythological in subject and almost pictorial in style, which are typical of the mural decoration popular under the early Empire and in the age of the Antonines. In the Throne Room, frescoed by Pierin del Vaga, is a statue, of colossal proportions and heroically nude, which was long, but erroneously, supposed to be the statue of Pompey at whose feet Caesar fell beneath the daggers of the conspirators. The head, though antique, is not a portrait of Pompey, and does not belong to the body. Found beneath the dividing wall of a cellar in the sixteenth century, the statue narrowly escaped being sawn in half to satisfy its contending claimants, but was luckily rescued from such a judgment of Solomon by Julius III.

Two enormous baths from the Thermæ of Caracalla, converted into fountains, adorn the square in front of the huge Farnese palace, which, with the possible exception of the Palazzo Barberini, is the finest in Rome. It was built for Cardinal Farnese, the future Paul III, largely with materials from the long-suffering Colosseum: the younger Sangallo, Michelangelo and Giacomo della Porta all in turn contributed to the design. It would be difficult to surpass the grandeur of the pillared and vaulted entrance, or the austere splendour of the great courtyard. The larger of the two sarcophagi on the far side of the *cortile* was brought from the mausoleum of Cecilia Metella on the Via Appia and is said still to contain her ashes. The ceiling of the great gallery on the first floor, a revel of joyous mythological nudities by the Caracci, delighted the Président de Brosses when he viewed it in 1739—"des sujets agréables et des

images riantes, au lieu de ces perpetuels sujets de dévotion si rebattus en Italie"—a sentiment with which many will sympathize.

Between the Campo de' Fiori and the Corso Vittorio Emanuele is another great palace, the Cancelleria or Papal Chancery, which has enjoyed extra-territorial privileges since 1870. The beautiful balcony at the corner near the Campo bears the della Rovere arms and the device of the builder of the palace, Cardinal Riario: the baroque portal, sculptured with the lions and pears of Sixtus V (Peretti), was added in the sixteenth century. The greater part of the palace seems to have been designed by Andrea Bregno —known as Andrea Montecavallo—but the persistent tradition that Bramante was the author of the famous court has received strong support from recent research. Needless to say, the Colosseum was once more called on for materials, though a considerable quota came from other ancient edifices, especially from the palatial *statio factionis prasinae*, the quarters of the Green charioteers of the Circus Maximus, which were once close by.

In the fourth century Pope Damasus erected here a chapel to St. Lawrence, together with a library and a depository for the Papal archives. The great granite columns of the courtyard, which probably came from the ancient *statio*, were once part of a portico surrounding the chapel—the present church of S. Lorenzo in Damaso—which soon assumed the dignity of a cardinalate. In the fifteenth century the terrible Cardinal Vitelleschi built himself a palace in which he incorporated the church, and which, after his murder in S. Angelo, passed to his rival, Cardinal Mezzarota, better known as Scarampo.

The luxury and cruelty of Scarampo, who, like his predecessor, was the Pope's legate in Rome, made him bitterly

hated. Lawlessness was rife: the price of provisions rose: oppressed and half starving, the Romans vainly growled curses at the palace, where sounds of reckless revelry mingled nightly with the savage baying of Scarampo's wolf-hounds. The features of his effigy, still surmounting his tomb in the church, are oddly unsuggestive of his ruthless and evil character.

Under Sixtus IV, the Pope's nephew, Raffaello Riario, became cardinal of S. Lorenzo at the age of sixteen. He at once began the demolition of the old palace, which he rebuilt, along with the church, on its present scale of somewhat frigid grandeur. The vast revenues from his many benefices were hardly able to cope with the expense: Innocent VIII, who had ordered Riario to return 60,000 ducats which he had won in a single evening's gambling from Innocent's nephew, Lorenzetto Cibò, was gaily told that every penny had already gone to meet the costs of the new palace.

At the accession of Leo X, Riario was the most powerful and wealthy member of the Sacred College, and never rode through the streets without a train of two hundred horsemen. But it was written that his star should ever pale before that of the Medici. As a youth, he had been imprisoned at Florence on suspicion of complicity in the murder of Giuliano: and now, in his old age, he was suddenly flung into S. Angelo on a charge of conspiring with two other cardinals against the life of Pope Leo. Not till he had paid a fine of 150,000 ducats, and signed a document bequeathing his splendid palace to the Papacy, was he released—only to die soon afterwards, broken and impoverished.

The capitals of the columns still bear the five-petalled rose that was the Riario badge. On the first floor is a large hall, frescoed by Vasari with scenes from the life of Paul III,

which are interesting chiefly from the number of contemporary portraits they contain. Vasari, whose innocent vanity is one of his most disarming characteristics, is said to have taken Michelangelo to see the work when completed, explaining proudly that he had finished it all in no more than a hundred days. "Si vede!" ("Evidently!") was the unkindly laconic reply.

Like nearly all palaces, in Rome as in other Italian cities, the Cancelleria was to all intents and purposes a miniature kingdom, within whose walls, or even in whose vicinity, the will of the princely owner was absolute and undisputed. De Brosses tells how an inoffensive passer-by was shot dead before his eyes by the porter of the palace, who had aimed from the doorway at an enemy across the street. No redress was to be had, as the Cardinal refused to surrender the homicide, and without his consent the police were powerless. The Bargello and his men hardly even dared to show themselves near the residence of any great personage, since he was only too apt to regard their presence as derogatory to his dignity, and take measures accordingly. Cardinal Balue, the well-known minister of Louis XI, was so offended by the execution of a criminal not far from his palace that he actually ordered his retainers to attack the court of justice, destroying all the documents and setting free the prisoners: while the *sbirri* who rashly ventured to arrest a malefactor outside the French embassy in 1739 were promptly set upon by the palace servants and thrashed almost within an inch of their lives!

CHAPTER XIV

THE ISLAND IN THE TIBER: TRASTEVERE AND THE JANICULUM

IN the year 509 B.C. a strange scene might have been witnessed in the Field of Mars beyond the walls of Rome. It was the height of summer, a few months after the infamous Tarquin and his followers had been driven with execrations to seek refuge and plot revenge in exile, and the broad corn-fields between the hills and the yellow Tiber were a sea of rippled gold. But the corn had been planted and grown under the sway of the tyrant, and the augurs declared it to be accursed, unfit to make honest bread for free men. Armed with knife and sickle, the people cut down the rich harvest, and flung it into the river. The tangled mass of stalks and leaves stranded on a submerged sandbank: in course of time silt and vegetable matter amalgamated and solidified: and thus—according to legend—was formed the island in the Tiber, which, with its two ancient bridges, is still one of the most picturesque features of the modern city.

With the gradual development of Rome's power and magnificence, the island was transformed into the likeness of a huge marble ship, with an obelisk for a mast: part of the marble stern may still be seen, sculptured with the sacred serpent of Aesculapius, to whom the island was dedicated as far back as 292 B.C. The shrine and precinct of the god of healing formed the first public hospital in Rome. From that time to the present day the cult of Aesculapius, in its practical, if not its religious, aspect, has been continuously

maintained, and is still worthily carried on in the actual institution of the Fatebenefratelli.

That the god's powers in ancient times were frequently and successfully exercised is proved by the discovery, some years ago, of a number of curious terra-cotta models of various parts of the body, which was made close to the Ponte Fabrizio. They were evidently part of a stock of *ex-votos* belonging to a tradesman who had set up his shop in convenient proximity to the temple and were intended for sale to grateful patients, who wished to suspend them in the temple—a practice still common in southern Italy, especially at the important shrine of St. Nicholas at Bari. Of the temple itself nothing now remains save the sacred spring, enclosed in a twelfth-century well-head in the church of S. Bartolommeo, which was built on the site of the temple by the Emperor Otto III about the year 1000.

Of the two bridges, both Republican in origin, the Ponte Cestio has been considerably altered at various times, from the fourth century onwards. The other, the Ponte Fabrizio —popularly known as the Ponte Quattro Capi from the double-headed herms on each side of the bridge-head— is still substantially unchanged since it was built in 62 B.C. by the *curator viarum,* Lucius Fabricius, whose inscription recording the event is countersigned, so to speak, by that of the consuls Lepidus and Lollius, who nearly forty years later declared themselves satisfied with the soundness of the construction. After nearly two thousand years their opinion may be safely endorsed! It was from the Pons Fabricius, according to Horace, that a ruined vendor of antiquities was on the point of ending his troubles in the Tiber, when a passing stoic persuaded him to adopt a more philosophic view of the situation. At its other extremity stands a medieval tower—a relic of the days when the

successors of Gregory VII took refuge on the island, protected by the swords of the Pierleoni and their followers, while the Imperialists and their anti-popes defiantly held the remainder of the city.

Here in 1264 the Ghibellines under Pietro da Vico made a daring attempt to seize Rome by a night attack. The alarm spread like wild-fire, the great bell of the Capitol rang *a sturmo*, and from every quarter the Guelfs rushed to the island—the torches flaring wildly in the darkness, and casting fantastic gleams upon the shadowy river. Beyond the farther bank the little church of S. Benedetto in Piscinula still marks the site of the house where St. Benedict, the founder of Western monasticism, was born. Here the invaders were forced back, overpowered and surrounded but still desperately fighting to the last: the Count of Vico's only son was drowned in the Tiber, and the Count himself, cutting his way out of the mêlée with great difficulty, escaped with only three companions to Cervetri.

Despite drastic changes, Trastevere—the quarter beyond the river—still retains abundance of its ancient character, and the most picturesque surviving example of a medieval Roman house, with its tower and loggia, its external staircase, and its old columns half buried in the wall, is that which faces the church of S. Cecilia. The old palace of the Mattei —transformed of late years into a modern residence—still overlooks the Ponte Cestio, while near the Ponte Garibaldi is the palace of the Anguillara, once almost supreme among the robber-lords of the Roman Campagna. Of the celebrated Count Eversus mention has already been made, but a good story is told of a later member of the family, who, during the visit to Rome of the Emperor Charles V in 1536, refused to remove his cap in the Emperor's presence, saying, with a laugh, that he had a cold. The Grand Chamberlain, however, insisted, upon which the young Count's

jesting manner swiftly vanished. "Tell the Emperor," he said sternly, "that I too am a grandee in my own house, and that he who would remove my cap from my head must do it with the sword!"

The old fortress-palace of the Anguillara, which has been much restored, is now the peaceful seat of a Dante society, but some of their tomb-effigies are still to be seen at S. Francesco a Ripa. There, in strange contrast, is also shown the cell once occupied by that gentlest of saints, Francis of Assisi, together with a portrait probably painted during his lifetime. The neighbourhood once formed part of the famous gardens of Julius Caesar,

> His private arbours and new-planted orchards
> On this side Tiber,

which he bequeathed to the people of Rome. The gardens extended to the ancient grove of Furrina, an old Italic goddess, on the slopes of the Janiculum, which has now been identified as lying within the grounds of the Villa Wurts. Here it was that the famous demagogue, Caius Gracchus, after his overthrow by the nobles, perished by his own hand: and here, some years ago, was discovered a curious sanctuary, probably erected about the second century A.D., containing a serpent-wreathed statuette of Chronos in gilded bronze and an image of the Syrian goddess, Atargatis.

About the beginning of the third century, Valerian, a young patrician, wedded a daughter of the noble house of the Cecilii, and brought her joyfully home to his palace in Trastevere. That same evening, however, the maiden informed him that she was a Christian, and had vowed herself to perpetual chastity. At her prayer, her angel guardian revealed himself to Valerian, who, struck with wonder, likewise embraced the new faith: and thenceforward the two shared a life of good works till they perished in the perse-

cution under Alexander Severus. Valerian died quickly: Cecilia, after a vain effort to stifle her in the baths of the palace, was condemned to the sword, and though three successive blows failed to decapitate her, she died after three days devoted to prayer and charity.

Such, at least, is the legend [1] which led, as early as the fourth century, to the erection of a church dedicated to S. Cecilia on what is believed to be the site of the palace of Valerian. The church was rebuilt in the ninth century by Paschal I, who—it is said—had discovered the body of the saint in the catacombs of St. Callixtus.

Through a baroque portal one enters the atrium, where a beautiful cantharus is surrounded by beds of flowers in imitation of the ancient *paradisus*. The small mosaics on the architrave of the porch, like the campanile, are perhaps of the twelfth century, and represent St. Cecilia, St. Valerian and St. Agatha, the patron saint of Sicily. The modish "improvements" of an eighteenth-century cardinal have, alas, turned the shrine of the patron saint of music into the semblance of a provincial concert-hall, but we can still enjoy the glow of the mosaics with which Paschal adorned the apse, while Stefano Maderno's recumbent figure of the saint is one of the most exquisite works of sculpture that sixteenth-century art has bequeathed us. The tabernacle is by Arnolfo di Cambio. In somewhat flimsy Gothic, it resembles his earlier work at S. Paolo fuori, but the almost circular arches, the classical wreaths with their floating ribbons, and the freer use of mosaic bear witness to the influence of Rome upon the artist from Tuscany.

Against the entrance wall of the church are two interest-

[1] An alternative theory, based on the researches of De Rossi (*Rom. Sott.*, ii, 147), is that St. Cecilia was put to death in Sicily under Marcus Aurelius.

ing monuments. The tomb on the left, bearing the royal arms of the Plantagenets, is that of Cardinal Adam Easton, some time Canon of Salisbury, who, with five other cardinals, was flung into prison at Nocera by Urban VI on a charge of conspiracy. "Their dungeon," says Davies in his *Renascence Tombs of Rome*, "was a disused cistern, and Dietrich of Niem, who was present, describes how the Pope paced the adjoining terrace reading his daily Office, while the screams of the prisoners in the hands of the torturers reached him from below." From Nocera the prisoners were dragged to Salerno; the aged Bishop of Aquila, unable to keep up, was murdered by Urban's orders and left to rot beside the road. Still in chains, the five survivors at last reached Genoa, where four were strangled for attempting to escape, and their bodies buried in a stable. The protests of Richard II barely saved Cardinal Easton from a like fate. He returned to Rome after the death of the ferocious Pope, and died in 1298.

The other tomb, a work of Mino da Fiesole, is that of Cardinal Niccolà Forteguerra, who was given his Hat by Pius II (Piccolomini). A good soldier, of high character and simple life, he not only did much to stamp out the robber barons of the Campagna, but founded a charitable association for poor students at Pistoia and the first *monte di pietà* in Italy.

A passage from the right aisle leads to the bathroom where, it is supposed, the attempt was made to suffocate St. Cecilia: remains of the pipes for the steam are still visible in the walls. Below the church, in addition to the somewhat garish crypt, in ultra-Byzantine style, containing the saint's tomb, are extensive remains of what is regarded as the palace of Valerian, though parts of the building are undoubtedly earlier. A little shrine containing a small terra-cotta image of Minerva is indeed earlier than Christianity itself.

In 1901, within the nuns' singing gallery above the entrance to the church, was brought to light a remarkable fresco of the "Last Judgement" by Pietro Cavallini. The discovery, which showed that Vasari's praise of the Roman master was perfectly justified, and indeed at once set him in the front rank of thirteenth-century painters, is furthermore a striking proof of Rome's artistic vitality during the early period of the Renaissance. The spirit of classic sculpture, as Professor Hermanin points out, seems to breathe in these majestic and vigorous forms, where the Christ has the head of a youthful Jupiter, and the seated Apostles, whose palliums resemble togas, have all the dignity of Senators. Cavallini was formerly supposed to have learned his art from Giotto, but it would now seem that the Florentine painter was, on the contrary, to some degree influenced by the Roman.

The quarters of the very police who may have arrested St. Cecilia and her husband are still visible in the Viale del Re. Near the Torre Anguillara are the remains of a private house, which was evidently acquired by the Government in the third century, and converted into a sub-station of the *vigiles*—the police and fire-brigade—of whom something over 7,000 seem to have been quartered in Rome. The walls of the various rooms are covered with *graffiti*, many of them referring to the task of carrying out the *sebaciaria*, the illuminations on public holidays, which was evidently regarded as a dangerous and fatiguing business. More than one of the inscriptions end with the significant phrase, "All's safe!", while one man has written, "I'm fagged out—let somebody else have a turn!"

Almost exactly opposite is the church of S. Crisogono, founded perhaps in the fourth century. Rebuilt in the twelfth, it was considerably altered by Cardinal Borghese in

the seventeenth, who spared, however, the fine Cosmatesque pavement, the massive granite columns of the nave and the two huge columns of porphyry supporting the triumphal arch, the alabaster pillars of the baldachin, and the mosaics by Cavallini in the apse. The earlier church, below, contains remains of frescoes, some of which may be as early as the eighth century. Others, such as the scenes of St. Benedict and St. Sylvester, or the figure of Pope Romanus embracing the feet of a saint, which are perhaps a century later, recall, in drawing and colouring, the miniatures of Carolingian manuscripts. On the walls of a room adjoining the apse are some of the earliest coats of arms known to students of heraldry.

Towards the middle of the twelfth century Innocent II rebuilt the ancient church of S. Maria in Trastevere, which, founded in the third century close to a *taberna meritoria*, or home for time-expired soldiers, was the earliest church in Rome to be dedicated to the cult of the Virgin. The mosaics on the façade, probably dating from the reign of Innocent, are usually supposed to represent the parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins, but as there are only ten virgins in all, eight of whom carry lighted lamps, this explanation may not be correct.

Though the handsome seventeenth-century ceiling is rather out of keeping with the rest of the church, the interior is deeply impressive—the ancient columns, the heavy entablature, the characteristic, temple-shaped ciborium, and the blaze of triumphant splendour from the gorgeous mosaics that fill all the western extremity of the church. The capitals of the columns, which once, perhaps, adorned the temple of Isis and Sarapis in the Campus Martius, were formerly sculptured with figures of Egyptian divinities, most of which, however, the wisdom of Pius IX saw fit to have

removed. Near the entrance is a graceful little tabernacle for the holy oils by Mino del Reame, a Neapolitan sculptor whose work, though inferior, is frequently mistaken for that of Mino da Fiesole.

The Altemps chapel at the end of the left aisle contains a remarkable painting of the Madonna, unfortunately badly darkened with age, which is known as the Madonna della Clemenza. It is probably a work of the twelfth century, emanating from the same school of Roman painters and sculptors which produced the wooden figure of the Madonna from Acuto in the museum of the Palazzo Venezia and the wonderful group of the Deposition in the Duomo at Tivoli. The influence of Byzantine art is here tempered by a wholly Roman realism.

The mosaics are of two periods. In the upper and older section Innocent appears to have employed the same artist or artists who had already executed the mosaics at S. Clemente. The resemblances in each between the symbols of the Evangelists, the figures of Isaiah and Jeremiah, the two Holy Cities, the mystic fruits and flowers on the under side of the arch, and the glory in the upper part of the semi-dome, are unmistakable. The symbol of the caged bird is also repeated, but much more prominently.

Above the arch, however, in place of the bust of Christ, as at S. Clemente, is a cross, from which hang the Alpha and Omega, between the Seven Candlesticks of the Apocalypse. In the Coronation of the Virgin, where Innocent is seen on the left, holding a model of the church, the artist has retained the gorgeousness, while completely abandoning the spirit, of Byzantine art. The jewel-like splendours of the central group, especially the figure of the Virgin in her crown and robes, would have satisfied any Byzantine mosaicist, but the idea of representing Christ with his arm

tenderly about his Mother's shoulders would never have entered his head.

The lower part of the apse is occupied by a series of scenes from the life of Mary executed by Cavallini for Cardinal Bertoldo Stefaneschi, who is seen below in the act of being presented to the Virgin by St. Peter, while St. Paul, opposite, grasps the sword of his martyrdom. In these mosaics Cavallini has obviously not yet freed himself, as in his great fresco at S. Cecilia, from the trammels of medieval and Byzantine convention. The "Taberna Meritoria" is quaintly depicted in the scene of the Nativity, while on the other side of the picture a little shepherd blows his horn like a medieval Boy Blue.

Of the many notable personages buried in S. Maria, the most familiar to English visitors is probably Cardinal Campeggio, whose sarcophagus is now in the porch. A simple tomb erected by Pius IX now shelters the remains of Innocent II, who, elected simultaneously with the Pierleoni Pope, Anacletus II, succeeded in making himself master of Rome only on the death of his powerful rival, and who passed away in 1143 amid the shouts of the revolted Romans on the Capitol, proclaiming the re-establishment of the Republic. His body, originally at the Lateran, was placed in a huge porphyry urn taken from the Mausoleum of Hadrian, and said to have formerly contained the ashes of the Emperor.

Close to the Gothic tomb-slab, in the left aisle, of Cardinal Bertoldo Stefaneschi, is the handsome monument of his descendant, Cardinal Pietro, who figured prominently in the history of his time. In 1405 he was largely instrumental in establishing a reconciliation between Innocent VII and his subjects, who, justly infuriated by the cowardly murder of their deputies at S. Spirito by the Pope's nephew, had

attacked the Vatican and forced Innocent and his court to flee for safety to Viterbo. Six years later an expedition against Ladislaus, King of Naples, which he helped to lead, ended disastrously in the capture and sack of Rome by the Neapolitans in 1413: and in 1417, when Braccio di Fortebraccio and Sforza d'Attendolo, the two greatest condottieri of the day, contended for the mastery of the city, Stefaneschi paid for backing the wrong side by dying in the dungeons of S. Angelo.

Both the tomb of Stefaneschi and of Cardinal Philippe d'Alencon, a member of the royal house of France, were removed hither from old St. Peter's, the d'Alencon monument suffering so severely in the process that some doubt exists whether the effigy is really his, since he must have been a much older man at his death in 1397. Very charming, on the other hand, is the relief where the Apostles, miraculously brought together from different parts of the world, attend the Virgin's death-bed, while Christ himself takes her soul in his arms, and an angel—a somewhat curious touch—holds up a reliquary. The Cardinal appears to have been something of a stormy petrel. He quarrelled violently with Charles VI of France, with the result that France was laid under an interdict: and when Urban VI in 1381 appointed him Patriarch of Aquileia, his new flock refused to accept him as their shepherd! Six years of unavailing warfare between Patriarch and people completely exhausted Urban's notoriously scanty patience, and d'Alencon, defeated and stripped of his benefices, returned to Rome to die. In the opposite aisle is the monument of Cardinal Francesco Armellini, who died in S. Angelo during the sack of 1527, partly as the result of his injuries, and even more from grief at the loss of the wealth he had amassed as Papal treasurer.

Close to the old Porta Settimiana, one of the gates in the

Aurelian wall, but rebuilt by Alexander VI, a sixteenth-century house with a Gothic window is traditionally held to have been the home of La Fornarina, the baker's beautiful daughter beloved by Raphael. A little beyond the gate is the Palazzo Corsini, with its magnificent staircase, erected in the eighteenth century on the site of the former palace of Cardinal Domenico Riario, rich in memories of Erasmus and Christina of Sweden. Here Joseph Bonaparte was residing as French ambassador in 1797, when the death of General Duphot in a riot within a few yards of the palace supplied the Directory with a pretext for occupying Rome and carrying into exile the unfortunate Pius VI. The palace now contains a national collection of paintings.

The Farnesina opposite, now the seat of the Roman Academy, is a masterpiece of Baldassarre Peruzzi, who designed it about 1510 for the wealthy and cultured Agostino Chigi. On the first floor of the villa—"born rather than built," in the admiring language of Vasari—Peruzzi, with masterly use of perspective, gave to the great *salon* the illusory appearance of a magnificent open loggia, between whose graceful columns appear fascinating vistas of sixteenth-century Rome. Agostino's bedroom, adjoining, was decorated with frescoes by Sodoma, whose painting of the nuptials of Alexander and Roxana is one of the loveliest things in Rome.

For the ceiling of a long gallery on the ground floor, then completely open to the garden, Raphael, with the help of his pupils, executed a series of scenes from the myth of Cupid and Psyche. These designs, in Raphael's latest manner, and almost sculptural, so to speak, in character, were chiefly painted by his assistants. They were not improved by the "restorations" of Carlo Maratta in the following century, which, by darkening the azure back-

ground, destroyed its original effect of airy infinity, and reduced the figures, in Venturi's words, to statues painted on cardboard.

"I would indeed hold myself for a great master, were but half Your Lordship writes me true," Raphael wrote in 1514 to Baldassarre Castiglione, thanking him for the praises he had heaped upon his "Galatea," which adorns the wall of the adjoining room. Painted probably in 1511, the picture is one of the most charming and imaginative productions of the great painter. The remaining decoration of the room is by Peruzzi and Sebastiano del Piombo.

It was in this, his villa beyond the walls, surrounded by gardens, and reflected in the flowing waters of the Tiber, that the Maecenas of the cinquecento entertained Popes and princes, poets and artists, at those symposia whose luxury and learning were a byword to their contemporaries. The story is told, how, at a banquet given to Leo X, the servants, on the conclusion of each course, flung the costly silver dishes into the river—the astounded guests being unaware that nets had previously been concealed beneath the surface of the stream! Fifteen hundred years before, scenes of at least equal magnificence had probably been witnessed on the same spot, for in 1879 excavations in the grounds of the villa resulted in the discovery of a Roman house of more than usual pretensions, whose walls were covered with beautiful paintings, and whose ceilings [1] were wrought in stucco with reliefs of the most refined art. The tempting suggestion that here was the house built by Caesar for Cleopatra is, however, improbable in view of the generally Augustan character of the decoration.

From the swarming streets of Trastevere one ascends to the airy quiet and beauty of the Janiculum, where Paul V's

[1] Both ceilings and paintings are now in the Museo Nazionale.

magnificent fountain splashes and sparkles in the sunlight, and Beatrice Cenci sleeps in her nameless grave in S. Pietro in Montorio beside Bramante's famous *tempietto*. At the other end of the ridge, beyond the open space where Garibaldi, wrapped in a proud melancholy, surveys the City to whose destiny he devoted his dreams, we come at last to the little church and monastery of S. Onofrio: a haunt of ancient peace, where the dying Tasso lingered out the last few months of his storm-tossed life. Pinturicchio and Boltraffio, Peruzzi and Domenichino, have each in turn added to its heritage of art, while on the solitary terrace before the church a little fountain murmurs its memories to the shadowing ilexes.

Part of the Janiculum has lately been occupied by the famous Collegio della Propaganda, where students from every country in the world are freely educated and trained as missionaries. Some consternation was recently caused by the request of a young Annamite, not long arrived in Rome, for a couple of wives (*un paio di moglie*), and was hardly allayed by his explanation that he felt cold at night! It was eventually discovered that the unhappy Oriental, suffering alike from the unaccustomed rigours of a European winter and an imperfect mastery of Italian idiom, was pleading merely for two warm under-vests (*maglie*). He was hastily supplied with half a dozen by the relieved authorities—evidently on the inverted principle that *melius est ardere quam nubere*.

CHAPTER XV

MONUMENTS AND MEMORIES OF THE ESQUILINE

BETWEEN the Subura and the Viminal, where later arose the gigantic Baths of Diocletian, an ancient thoroughfare, the Vicus Patricius, crossed the western slope of the Esquiline hill. Almost on the level of the Vicus, and considerably below that of the modern Via Urbana which represents it to-day, stands the church dedicated to St. Pudentiana, daughter of the Senator Pudens, who is said to have entertained St. Peter in Rome, and to have been the first, or among the first, to be converted by him to the new faith. Below the church are considerable remains of buildings dating from the beginning of the first century, together with a much-damaged fresco, perhaps five or six centuries later, showing St. Peter between St. Pudentiana and her sister, St. Praxed. It is at least not impossible that here we have the actual remains of the house in which St. Peter dwelt, and in which St. Paul also was a guest, to judge by the conclusion of his second epistle to Timothy.

Founded in the fourth century, the church still preserves its medieval campanile and its beautiful portal sculptured with the Mystical Lamb between St. Pastor and St. Praxed on one side, and St. Pudentiana and St. Pudens on the other. Recent excavations, the results of which have not yet been published, have brought to light part of the *thermæ* built in the second century by Novatus, the son of Pudens, in which the church was constructed. Undoubtedly contem-

porary with the foundation of the church is the magnificent mosaic of the apse, which, despite the injuries inflicted by sixteenth-century vandalism, is still the finest in Rome.

The subject is evidently the Parousia, or Second Coming. Robed in gold and azure, Christ sits upon a jewelled throne, holding in his hand a book inscribed, "Dominus Conservator Ecclesiae Pudentianae": his expression is mild and serene, undarkened by the gloomy and ascetic severity of later representations. To right and left of the Saviour are seated the Apostles, of whom, unfortunately, the two endmost are now missing: the two female figures holding wreaths above the heads of SS. Peter and Paul probably personify the Jewish and Gentile Churches (Galatians ii. 7). Beyond the long portico in the background appear various monumental buildings, while in the centre, behind the Saviour's head, rises a hill surmounted by a jewelled cross and crown. Amid the clouds of sunset loom the Four Beasts of the Apocalypse, two of whom were almost entirely destroyed by the restorations of the sixteenth century. The monogram of Adrian I, who restored the church in the eighth century, and the figures of the Dove and the Lamb, all of which were once below the throne, have entirely vanished.

The architectural background, in which some have seen a representation of Rome, and others the palace of Pudens, is more probably a picture of Constantinian Jerusalem, idealized as the New Jerusalem of the Apocalypse. The great portico is one of the two long colonnades flanking the broad street which ran north and south through the city: in the centre of the eastern colonnade—here shown—Mount Calvary represents the great church of the Martyrium built by Constantine on the site of the Crucifixion. To the left is the Anastasis, the round church of the Holy Sepulchre: the great basilica connected with it is partly visible, partly

hidden by the hill. The polygonal church on the right, with an opening in the roof, is probably intended for the church of the Ascension—really situated on the Mount of Olives, but inserted here for the sake of completeness. To this likewise a basilica was attached—a plan copied by the Templars in their churches, as, for example, in London. It is interesting to compare with this mosaic a curious mosaic map of Palestine now at the Lateran, which shows the topography of Jerusalem in the sixth century.

The sister church of S. Pudenziana, built also on part of the property of Pudens, is S. Prassede, but though sisters they are by no means twins. Rebuilt by Paschal I in the ninth century, S. Prassede belongs wholly to the Middle Ages. In 1118 it was the scene of a furious onslaught by the Frangipani on the adherents of the venerable Gelasius II, who had already suffered violence at their hands. Escaping from the church in the confusion, the Pope scrambled on horseback, and was found at evening seated despondently amid the open fields near S. Paolo fuori. "St. Praxed's," as Browning remarks, "ever was the church for peace!"

The usual entrance to the church is from the side, but the old porch, like that of S. Clemente, still exists in the Via S. Martino ai Monti. On the left of the end portal two columns of the old ciborium frame a slab which legend says was used by St. Praxed as a pillow. The capitals of the nave are sculptured with cocks, oak-trees, doves and eagles, while the architrave on each side is a quaint hotchpotch of ancient fragments.

During the restoration of the church some years ago two large carved slabs, apparently from the old *schola cantorum*, were discovered under the floor of the nave, and are now in the chapel of the Crucifix. They are sculptured with crosses, the arms of which have been carefully chiselled off,

leaving only the uprights. Precisely the same phenomenon is observable on the doors of Justinian's great church of the Holy Wisdom at Constantinople. Sir Flinders Petrie, who first drew the writer's attention to this curious mutilation, believes that it is in each case the work of the Iconoclasts, who, eager to rebut the charge of polytheism levelled against Christianity—one of the chief sources of hostility on the part of the monotheistic Mohammedans—had thus sought to convert the symbol of the Trinity into that of the One God. Paschal I, a violent opponent of the Iconoclasts, evidently had the offending slabs removed on his accession.

The church is full of interesting monuments. At the foot of the nave is the tomb-slab of Giovanni Carbone, a Neapolitan soldier who died "in hac alma Urbe" in 1388. Of the thirteenth century is the incised tomb-slab of the chemist, Giovanni Montopoli, whose costume shows that he died on pilgrimage. "As ye are, so was I: as I am, so will ye be," runs the inscription. More ambitious memorials are those of Cardinal Ancherus de Troyes—who helped to crown Charles of Anjou—and of Cardinal Alain de Taillebourg of Brittany, a fiery prelate who spoke his mind freely. Furious at Paul II's refusal to abide by the Capitulations, he accused him to his face of studying for twenty-four years simply to cheat the Cardinals on this one occasion: and he frustrated Bessarion's hopes of the Papacy by sarcastically demanding if the Conclave was really to elect a Greek who had not been long enough in Italy even to shave off his beard!

Though eloquent of the depths of barbarism to which Rome had sunk in the ninth century, the mosaics of S. Prassede are decidedly interesting. Paschal had had the bones of more than two thousand persons, whom he supposed

to have been martyrs, transferred from the catacombs to the church: and hence on the triumphal arch we see the unprecedented representation of the Heavenly City (Rev. xxi) "garnished with all manner of precious stones," where Christ stands waiting to meet the approaching martyrs, "who have come out of great tribulation," and to "wipe away all tears from their eyes." Below, a great host robed in white wave their palms in triumphant jubilation. Crude in technique, the scene is none the less beautiful in its general effect, and displays a power of imaginative composition surprising in so barbarous an age.

More conventional are the mosaics of the apse and the enclosing arch. The chapel of S. Zeno, on the other hand, originally built by Paschal as a mausoleum for his mother, is unique in Rome, not only by its design but by its barbaric and mysterious beauty, which indeed caused it to be known formerly as the *Hortus Paradisi*, or Garden of Paradise. A round-headed window above the original doorway is enclosed within a double row of mosaic medallions—one of Christ and the Apostles, the other of the Virgin and ten saints. Nowadays, however, one enters by a small side-door: and, once inside, the dark, four-sided cell, capped, in Byzantine fashion, by a cupola, the large-eyed, ascetic figures that loom, phantom-like, from the continuous background of sombrely blue mosaic, are hauntingly suggestive of something old and strange and secret. The shadowy vault, where a tondo of Christ is supported, as by caryatids, by the four angels (Rev. vii. 1) that stand on the four corners of the earth, conveys, despite its actual smallness, an impression of infinite space. In the adjoining chapel is a fragmentary column of blood jasper, brought from Jerusalem by Cardinal Giovanni Colonna in 1219 during the Fifth Crusade. Its legendary claim to be the column of the Flagellation is

disputed by another still preserved at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem.

The queen of the Esquiline is the great basilica of S. Maria Maggiore, before which stands a magnificent monolithic column removed by Paul V from the basilica of Maxentius. The origins of the church are obscure. According to a late, if picturesque, legend, the Virgin in person appeared in a dream to Pope Liberius and the Patricius Johannes during the night preceding the 5th of August, 352, and enjoined the erection of a basilica in her honour on the Esquiline, the precise area being marked by a miraculous fall of snow, whose discovery is commemorated yearly by a special Mass, when white flowers, in imitation of snow-flakes, are let fall from the roof of the church. The earliest reference to the miracle is found only in the thirteenth century. The legend would seem, therefore, to be not greatly antecedent to the mosaics, by Filippo Rusuti, which depict it on the old façade, and which are still easily studied from the loggia of the beautiful façade added in the eighteenth century by Benedict XIV.

In 367 the Liberian basilica was the scene of a bloody encounter between the supporters of Pope Damasus and those of his rival, Ursinus, when about one hundred and fifty persons were killed, and hundreds of others seriously wounded. Sixtus III, who was elected in 432, rebuilt the church, and dedicated it to the Virgin, whose divine maternity had just been formally proclaimed by the Council of Ephesus. It seems probable that Sixtus, like John VII at St. Peter's, and Gregory IV at S. Maria in Trastevere, set up a representation of the Nativity resembling the *presepi* so frequently seen at Christmas-time in Italian churches to-day. The admiration it provoked was doubtless the origin of the name of S. Maria ad Presepe, by which the church was already known nearly two hundred years before the transference

thither of the famous Holy Cradle, which is now its most venerated relic.

It was in the Sixtine basilica that the exarch Olympius, by order of the Emperor Constantine II, appears to have made an unsuccessful attempt to assassinate Pope Martin I in 653. An even more daring outrage occurred on Christmas Eve, 1075, when a ruffianly noble named Cencius, a partisan of Henry IV of Germany, burst into the church, where Gregory VII was celebrating midnight Mass in the little underground chapel of the Presepio. Seizing the Pope, Cencius and his men stripped him of his pontifical robes, wounded him in the forehead, and hurried him to Cencius's stronghold close to the Ponte S. Angelo. The night was cold and stormy, and the suddenness of the blow, coupled with the smallness of the congregation at such an hour, at first hindered any general realization of what had happened: but no sooner was the truth known than the city was in wild uproar. The furious populace, aided by the Roman militia, attacked the fortress, and Gregory, hastily liberated by his alarmed captor, returned tranquilly to S. Maria to complete his interrupted Mass.

More than almost any other great Roman basilica, St. Mary Major has preserved its ancient appearance. The majestic columns of Hymettian marble, the architrave with its classical decoration, the series of mosaic panels on each side of the nave, and the magnificent triumphal arch, are much as they were when Sixtus first dedicated his great church. Work is now in progress to remove the later ceiling behind the arch, and expose the ancient Sixtine transept, still adorned by frescoes of the thirteenth century, including a series of large medallion-paintings of saints on a dark-blue ground. The gorgeous apse-mosaics, representing the coronation of the Virgin, were chiefly executed in the thir-

teenth century by Jacopo Torriti at the expense of Cardinal Jacopo Colonna, who is shown on the right, kneeling in front of the Baptist.

The mosaic panels of the nave, while it would be an exaggeration to say that they are thoroughly classical in composition and treatment, display none the less the unmistakable influence of classical models. Arranged in two rows, one above the other, they consist of a series of scenes from the stories of Abraham, Jacob, Moses and Joshua, the history of the Israelites being interpreted as a foreshadowing of the coming of the Messiah. A good pair of binoculars, however, is absolutely necessary for the study of these extraordinarily interesting pictures. Unfortunately only twenty-seven of the original forty-two are left, and many even of these are in far from perfect condition, while some have been hopelessly ruined by so-called restoration.

The scenes which cover the great triumphal arch are devoted to the glorification of the Virgin and her divine Son. The technique is markedly different from that of the nave mosaics, and the influence of Byzantium is at once apparent in the centre of the arch, where we find the *Etimasia* (Rev. v. 1.), the mystical Throne, upon which are a jewelled Cross and the Scroll with Seven Seals. On either side stand Peter and Paul, and the symbols of the four Evangelists appear in the sky. Beneath is the dedication, "Xystus Episcopus Plebi Dei," while on the underside of the arch is the monogram of Christ.

The subjects of the arch are treated with remarkable originality. Not the human, but the divine nature of the Saviour and his Mother is emphasized. In the Annunciation, on the left, Mary sits enthroned, like an empress rather than a carpenter's wife, attended by three great angels: above her head descends the Holy Ghost, while the angelic

messenger flies towards her, resembling a winged Victory. Two other angels advance towards Joseph, whose gesture of the right hand, it has been pointed out, is that still in use among southern Italians when demanding a categorical reply on a subject of serious importance. Flanking the scene are two small temple-like buildings. That nearest the Virgin is closed by bronze doors, across which is draped a golden net—a beautiful symbol of maiden purity, recalling the apostrophe to the Virgin as "a shining crown of chastity, *an indestructible temple*," uttered by Cyril of Alexandria at the Council of Ephesus.

Against the columned portico of the temple of Jerusalem, on the pediment of which is a seated figure resembling the goddess Roma, develops the scene of the Presentation. Attended by angels, the advancing Virgin, magnificently arrayed, holds the Child as if enthroned, while Simeon, his hands respectfully hidden in his mantle, hastens to receive her. Behind him stand priests and Levites, while on the steps of the temple are the two doves prescribed for the sacrifice.

In the Adoration of the Magi the Infant Christ sits majestically upon a magnificent throne, behind which stand four angels, while the Star glitters above his head. The Virgin is seated on the left: on the right is a female figure, remarkable by her beauty and dignity, whose identity has not been satisfactorily established. Two of the Magi appear on the right of the picture: the third, now destroyed, was probably on the left of the throne. On the opposite side of the arch a mythical king, Affrodosius, among whose courtiers is conspicuous a typical Greek philosopher, leaning on his staff, receives the Holy Family on their arrival in Egypt. This episode, which is drawn from the Apocrypha, is unique in Christian iconography. Below the Adoration

is the Massacre of the Innocents, which is treated with great restraint, and indeed is hardly more than suggested. Facing it, the Magi are seen before Herod, who—it is interesting to note—is depicted with a halo, here symbolizing, not holiness, but power.

Magnificent as they are, one cannot but regret the presence of the two great chapels which open off to right and left of the church. They are totally out of keeping with the rest of the building, and the arches facing them not only break the splendid sweep of the nave, but involved the destruction of several of the mosaic pictures above the architrave.

The chapel of the Sacrament on the right was built by Fontana for Cardinal Felice Peretti, who rose from the humblest beginnings—he is said to have herded swine as a boy—and in spite of the greatest difficulties, to become, first cardinal, and finally Pope Sixtus V, one of the greatest Popes who ever filled the chair of St. Peter. Here too is buried the Ghislieri Pope, Pius V, whose reign is chiefly memorable for the crushing naval defeat of the Turks at Lepanto. The arch below the altar of the Sacrament is the entrance to the old subterranean chapel of the Presepe, which was restored by Arnolfo di Cambio in the thirteenth century. The figures of David and Isaiah in the spandrels are unmistakably his work, while the group of the Adoration (reached by a dark passage from the Confessio) is one of the most attractive examples of medieval sculpture in Rome.

The gorgeous Pauline Chapel opposite—"a lapidary's paradise," as it has been called—was built for the Borghese Pope, Paul V, who also erected the monument to Clement VIII (Aldobrandini), his former friend and protector. Above the altar is an exquisite tabernacle by Camillo Mariani, where angels in joyous dance encircle a much-revered paint-

ing of the Madonna. Though most probably of the ninth century, it is traditionally held to be that which Gregory the Great was carrying in procession during a frightful pestilence, when, as he crossed the Ponte S. Angelo, he suddenly beheld St. Michael poised in air above the Mausoleum of Hadrian, and sheathing his destroying sword. The picture was long believed to possess miraculous powers, and was looked upon virtually as the Palladium of medieval Rome.

To adorn the splendid ceiling of the church Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain presented Alexander VI with the first gold brought from the New World. In the fifteenth century Cardinal d'Estouteville enriched the church with a beautiful ciborium by Mino del Reame, some of whose reliefs now adorn the wall of the tribune, while others are to be seen in the sacristy. According to tradition, the ancient bath of porphyry beneath the altar was once the sarcophagus of the Patricius Johannes. At the end of the right aisle is the tomb of Cardinal Gonsalvo Rodriguez, who died in 1299, a beautiful work by Giovanni di Cosma. A curiosity in the Baptistery is Bernini's memorial of a negro envoy sent by a Congo chief to Urban VIII, and ennobled by the Pope with the delightful title of the Marquis of Nigritia!

Many are the inducements to linger on the Esquiline! Only a few yards away, in the Via Carlo Alberti, is the finest Romanesque portal in Rome—that of the former church of S. Antonio, where until recent years every Roman cabman brought his Rosinante to be blessed on St. Anthony's Day (January 15). Further on, where a fragment still projects from the modern houses, the hill was crossed by the Servian wall, and in the little Via di S. Vito the third-century arch erected in honour of the Emperor Gallienus

marks the site of the earlier Porta Esquilina. Beyond the gate, in Republican times, lay a No-Man's-Land, the reputed haunt of witches and worse, where in great pits were flung the bodies of slaves, criminals and animals, together with all the refuse of the city. It was only in the reign of Augustus that Maecenas transformed the entire quarter by covering this Aceldama with a deep layer of earth, where magnificent gardens took the place of its former horrors. The interesting building at the corner of the Via Merulana and the Via Leopardi may have been a kind of conservatory in the gardens of Maecenas.

Other great Roman families had palaces and gardens on the Esquiline. In the grounds of the Aelii Lamia palace the ashes of the murdered Caligula were temporarily laid, till the continual apparition of his restless phantom compelled their transference to the mausoleum of Augustus. The dimensions of the palace must have been superb, since Pliny tells us that in one hall was a portrait of Nero on canvas, a hundred and twenty feet high. Vettius Agorius Pretextatus, the friend of Julian, had a palace on the site of the modern Palazzo Brancaccio, whose grounds contain important remains of the great Baths of Trajan. Of Pretextatus, a staunch Pagan, who built the Porticus Deum Consentium in the Forum, it is told how Pope St. Damasus once urged him to become a Christian. The Prefect ironically surveyed his interlocutor's splendid robes, and replied, "Make me Bishop of Rome, and I will be converted to-morrow!"

In the Piazza Vittorio Emanuele, close to the striking ruins of one of the many monumental fountains which adorned Rome under the Empire, is the "Porta Magica," the gateway of the now vanished villa of the Marchese Palombara, a fellow-dabbler in alchemy with Christina of

Sweden. It is engraved with cabalistic symbols and oracles of the gravest absurdity—a recipe, it is said, for making gold, which was left without explanation by a mysterious visitor to the Marchese. Failing to elucidate it himself, the Marchese had it carved on his gateway in the pathetic hope that some passer-by might be able to enlighten him!

The so-called "temple of Minerva Medica," which usually catches the eye of the arriving tourist just before his train rolls into the central station, is really a large nymphaeum—a kind of pavilion or summer-house adorned with fountains and statuary—which perhaps belonged to the palace and gardens of the Licinii, a favourite resort of the Emperor Gallienus. Not far from here, in 1919, the building of a garage led to the discovery, in the Viale Manzoni, of a singularly interesting hypogeum. It is rich in frescoes of the beginning of the third century: though now generally recognized as Christian, they are strongly tinged with the mystical doctrines of the Gnostics, and are often of very obscure significance. Among them are eleven finely drawn figures, which probably represent the Apostles.

Considerable discussion has been occasioned by some of the scenes. In one we seem to have the apparition of Christ to the assembled Apostles after his death, while another has been thought to depict Christ seated on a throne in the Forum of the heavenly City, judging the souls that are led before him. Perhaps the most interesting of all is the scene in which a mounted figure, brandishing a scroll, approaches as if in triumph the gates of a city—probably Jerusalem—where an ass lies within a stable. In the opinion of Professor C. Cecchelli, it shows the foretold triumph of the Anti-Christ, expected with dread by the early centuries of Christianity: the humble ass which bore the Saviour being

purposely contrasted with the caracoling steed of the exultant False Prophet.

At the foot of the hill, adjoining the remains of a small amphitheatre for military sports and exercises, is the important basilica of S. Croce in Gerusalemme, one of the seven pilgrim churches of Rome. It occupies the site of the Sessorium, the palace in which St. Helena constructed an oratory for a precious relic of that True Cross which she had herself discovered at Jerusalem. The story of the discovery is depicted in the interesting frescoes with which Antoniazzo Romano in the fifteenth century decorated the apse. The church was founded in the fourth century, but its ancient character has been almost totally destroyed by its rebuilding in 1744 under Benedict XIV.

A stair at the end of the left aisle leads to the underground chapel of St. Helena. It is the oldest existing portion of the church, and is modelled on one of the two small underground oratories formerly in the basilica of the Holy Cross on Golgotha. The beautiful ceiling-mosaics are attributed to Melozzo da Forlì. Upon the altar is an ancient statue of Juno, found at Ostia, and transformed, by the addition of a modern head, into an image of St. Helena. Christianity and paganism are often strangely interwoven in Rome, as indeed they are elsewhere, but the cult of a pagan goddess under the thin disguise of a Christian saint is probably unique.

CHAPTER XVI

THE VATICAN

THE beginnings of the Vatican emerge as early as the fifth century, but it was not until their return from Avignon in 1377 that it began definitely to take the place of the Lateran as the principal residence of the Popes. The nucleus of the existing palace is chiefly due to Nicholas V, for whom Fra Angelico, aided by his pupil, Benozzo Gozzoli, decorated a small room—oratory or study—with a series of frescoed scenes drawn from the lives of St. Stephen and St. Lawrence. These paintings, in which Nicholas himself appears in the guise of the martyred Sixtus II, are the finest, as they were the last, achievement of the master. In place of the delicate and miniature-like style, the rainbow-coloured visions, so familiar in his other and earlier works, the painter, while sacrificing nothing of his habitual refinement or smooth harmony of colour, here reveals unguessed powers as an historical painter. He identifies himself, to quote Cecchelli, with the lives of the two saints, and projects them on a background filled with movement. Strange to recall that the approach to this room was, at some later period, bricked up, and its very existence completely forgotten! It was finally rediscovered by an architect who had observed a certain space, mysteriously unaccounted for, in the plans of the palace.

The library founded by Nicholas, himself one of the greatest scholars of the Renaissance, was immensely enriched by Sixtus IV, who appointed as librarian the celebrated

Cardinal Platina. The appointment is recorded by a famous painting—formerly attributed to Melozzo da Forlì but more probably by Piero della Francesca—which is now in the Vatican Pinacoteca. On the right of the Pope stands the youthful Raffaello Riario, while between Sixtus and the kneeling Platina is Cardinal Giuliano, afterwards Julius II. Behind Platina are two other nephews of Sixtus: Giovanni della Rovere, prefect of Rome in 1475, and, furthest to the left, the truculent Girolamo Riario, destined to be murdered at Forlì in 1488.

About the year 1475 Sixtus had begun the building of the palatine chapel—finally completed in 1483—which still bears his name. Whoever the designer, Giovanni de' Dolci of Florence or another, its architectural pretensions are in no way remarkable. Seen from without, the high, narrow windows, the machicolations that encircle it, remind us that the Vatican of those days was still a fortress. Above the ceiling of the chapel are some rooms once used by the soldiers of the guard, the souvenirs of whose occupation may still be seen scrawled upon the walls.

The original decoration of the chapel-ceiling—golden stars on a blue ground—was simple enough, but the magnificent mosaic pavement shows that the art of the Cosmati was still vigorously flourishing in the fifteenth century. The decoration of the walls was divided into three parts. Between the windows was a series of portraits of the Popes: the lowest part, still preserved, was painted in imitation of gold brocade, embroidered with the della Rovere oak-tree: while between the two extended the usual concordance between the Old and New Testaments. By the end of 1482 the most distinguished artists of the age were at work on the magnificent series of frescoes that still cover the walls with an elaborate parallel between the life of Moses,

to the left of the altar, and the life of Christ, to the right.

Of the first two, the Circumcision of the children of Moses and Zipporah and the Baptism of Christ, the general design is obviously that of Perugino. The first, however, is chiefly executed by Pinturicchio—the exquisite landscape in the background is unmistakably his, though the lovely female figure in the left foreground is thoroughly Peruginesque. Notice that here, as elsewhere, Moses wears a robe of green and yellow, the colours prescribed by the Church. In the Baptism of Christ, on the other hand, Venturi detects the hand of Andrea d'Assisi, whose work is stiffer and more laboured.

Perugino himself has achieved what is perhaps his masterpiece in the painting of Christ entrusting the Keys to Peter, which is the finest of the whole series. The admirable balance of the composition is perhaps a little too perceptibly artificial, but an ample spaciousness, a vivid yet tranquil luminosity, pervades the scene, depicted with a dignity entirely worthy of its subject. The centre of the background is occupied by the temple of Jerusalem, which gives the key, so to speak, to the two groups in the middle distance. On the left, Christ calmly confronts a number of men armed with swords and lances (Matt. xxvi. 55: "Are ye come out to take me as against a thief with swords and staves? I was daily with you in the Temple, and ye sought me not"). Opposite, men run hither and thither with stones, seeking to throw them at Jesus, who passes unseen through their midst (John viii. 59: "Then took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself and went out of the Temple, going through the midst of them"). The fourth figure from the right in the foreground is Perugino himself, while the two end figures are possibly the brothers Sangallo.

The three frescoes of Botticelli are unusually interesting, for more than one reason. In the Punishment of Korah, Dathan and Abiram, there is, declares Cecchelli, "a science of movement and an accent of strength unknown in the other works of the master." "Of the Botticelli of the Spring, or the Birth of Venus, the enigmatic representative of that strange mingling of Platonism and Epicureanism which was the Florence of Lorenzo the Magnificent, there is in this picture no trace whatever." The subject was chosen to commemorate the triumph of the Pope over a Hungarian archbishop named Zanoumetic, who, after denouncing Sixtus as "a child of the devil," and demanding his deposition, had perished miserably in prison by his own hand. Hence the representation of Moses crowned with the Papal tiara, while behind him rises the Arch of Constantine, emblematical of the celebrated, if apocryphal, Donation, on which rested the Papal claim to temporal dominion.

Botticelli had introduced his own portrait in the second figure of the back row on the right. On the left, behind the stooping figure of Moses, is the famous Humanist, Pomponius Laetus, whose scholastic attainments were as remarkable as his birth was obscure. It is said that his relatives, who had done nothing to help him in the days of his youth and poverty, sought to cultivate his acquaintance when he had become rich and celebrated, receiving in reply the brief letter: "Pomponius Laetus to his relatives, greeting. What you ask may not be. Farewell."

In his other two paintings Botticelli is again alluding to current events. Moses watering the flocks of the daughters of Laban is a reference to the restoration of the Aqua Vergine by Sixtus. Opposite, where the High Priest receives a newly healed leper, come to purify himself according to the

law (Levit. xiv. 1–32), the Temple of Jerusalem is represented by the hospital of S. Spirito, which Sixtus had just built. The tiara of the High Priest is topped by the della Rovere acorn, while the della Rovere oak stands on the right of the temple. Behind the leper is the melancholy figure of Cardinal Giuliano—the future Julius II—and further to the right, holding his baton of office as Gonfaloniere of S. Maria del Popolo, is the sinister Count Girolamo.

Why, however, should Botticelli have chosen for his subject the purification of a leper? So far as I know, no one has drawn attention to the fact that the leper himself is a portrait of Lorenzo de' Medici, then sole ruler of Florence, while the youth who bends forward eagerly behind the High Priest bears an equally strong likeness to his brother Giuliano, murdered by the Pazzi in 1478 with at least the partial connivance of the Pope. Despite the protests of all Christendom, Sixtus next proclaimed a relentless war upon Florence: and it was only in 1480, the year in which Botticelli began work in the chapel, that the danger from the Turks, who had captured Otranto and were besieging Rhodes, compelled the savage Pope to make peace. Enthroned outside St. Peter's, he received the kneeling envoys of the Republic, touched them with a rod in token of humiliation and chastisement, and finally gave them absolution in the cathedral.

This is the scene which—naturally by the Pope's orders—Botticelli has symbolically represented. But the painter himself, as a patriotic Florentine, must have viewed the whole business very differently, and he has not lost the opportunity of expressing his opinion. Ironically enough, the ostensible subject of the picture—the Temptation in the Wilderness—has been completely elbowed into the back-

ground by Sixtus's demand for self-glorification. In view, however, of the fact that Sixtus was himself a Franciscan, the representation of the Evil One in the guise of a Capuchin friar can be nothing else than a daring and bitter home-thrust on the part of the painter at the expense of the enemy of his country, the un-Christian Vicar of Christ.

The terror which the Turkish invasion inspired in Sixtus, his efforts to form a crusade, and the relief felt at the repulse of the infidels, are vividly expressed in the painting of the Crossing of the Red Sea and the Drowning of Pharaoh's army. The authorship of the fresco is still uncertain: Venturi attributes it to Fra Diamante, while Gèza de Francovich, followed by Cecchelli, ascribes it to Ghirlandaio and his brother Benedetto, assisted by Cosimo Roselli. Behind and to the right of Moses is the aged Cardinal Bessarion, carrying a reliquary, who, prior to his death some years before, had been the soul of every attempt to organize a crusade since the days of Nicholas V.

According to Vasari, Ghirlandaio was richly rewarded by Sixtus for his picture of the evocation of SS. Peter and Andrew. With its finely grouped composition, and its background of lake and mountains bathed in light, it is one of the most beautiful in the whole series. Much ingenuity has been expended in attempting to identify the contemporary personages represented in the picture, but for the most part expended in vain. We may perhaps recognize, in the group on the right, the bearded head of the famous Greek scholar, Argyropoulos, and, immediately to the left, the wealthy banker, Giovanni Tornabuoni, Ghirlandaio's patron. Even these, however, are by no means certain.

It is probable that Cosimo Roselli, in his frescoes of Moses on Sinai and The Last Supper, is considerably indebted to his assistants, especially the eccentric Piero di Cosimo, who,

so Vasari tells us, lived on hard-boiled eggs which he cooked by the fifties when he boiled his varnishes, and hid himself in terror during thunderstorms. The last of the series, representing the last days of Moses, is undoubtedly designed by Luca Signorelli, who had joined the other painters in the chapel towards the end of 1482, but the execution, as Venturi demonstrates, is chiefly that of Bartolommeo della Gatta.

Neither Innocent VIII nor Alexander VI made any alterations or additions to the Sixtine, the latter preferring to beautify his private suite, the famous Appartamento Borgia. The work was entrusted to Pinturicchio, who began it in 1492 and finished it in 1495. The splendour beloved by the Borgia Pope, the sinister shadow that overhangs the Borgia name, unite in rooms none too well lighted, but whose walls and ceilings glow with gold and colour, with paintings and stucco—an art which weaves the legends of early Christianity, the twilit mystery of the Umbrian landscape, and the luxury and fantasy of the Orient, into a magic web filled with all the charm and gaiety of a fairy-tale.

Looking at these delightful pictures, it is hard to recall that in the first of these very rooms the wounded Prince of Bisceglie was strangled by Cesare's orders: that in the great hall [1]—redecorated later by Giovanni da Udine and Pierin del Vaga in consequence of a collapse of the ceiling which nearly cost Alexander his life—took place, probably, those almost incredible orgies so dryly recorded in the *Diario*

[1] Of the two suits of armour, in glass cases, preserved in this hall, that nearest the entrance was worn by the Constable of Bourbon in 1527, and plainly shows the mark of the bullet which struck him down during the assault. The other is said to be that of Julius II, who usually preferred the sword of Paul to the keys of Peter.

of Burkhard: that beyond the door leading from the Pope's *studiolo*, with its magnificent chimney-piece, is the bedroom where, in August, 1503, Alexander lay, a swollen and blackened corpse—"lo piu brutto morto che fu visto mai, nero piu che lo diavolo." [1] No wonder, perhaps, that his successor, Julius II, refused to inhabit the apartments polluted by the Borgias and their court.

What that court was like, at least externally, in its strange mingling of luxury and coarseness, of paganism and Christianity, of East and West, is more than adumbrated in the lovely fresco where Lucrezia and Cesare respectively masquerade as the saintly Catherine of Alexandria and the tyrant Emperor Maximin. To the left of the throne, in the national Greek costume of the time, is Andrew Palaeologus, the exiled despot of Morea, who had taken refuge in Rome from the invading Turks: to the right, a turbaned figure—perhaps the captain of the Papal janissaries—who appears also in the Ancona fresco of the Piccolomini library at Siena. More interesting is the Oriental cavalier on the right of the picture, unmistakable from his likeness to the portrait of his father, Mohammed II, in the National Gallery. It is the luckless Prince Djem—evidently about to ride forth on one of the hunting or sight-seeing expeditions which were among the chief pleasures of his captivity.

Corrado Ricci cynically suggests that Alexander's devotion to St. Catherine may have been due to her position as protectress of illegitimate children—certainly a natural choice for a Holy Father who was more often father than holy! The acknowledged family of Alexander, minus Lucrezia, is seen in the painting of the Resurrection, with the Pope

[1] "The most hideous corpse ever seen, blacker than the devil." M. S. Branca (quoted by Gregorovius).

himself—a magnificent portrait—kneeling in adoration on the left. The portrait of the kneeling soldier on the right is that of Juan, Duke of Gandia, whose brother and subsequent murderer, Cesare, looks towards us holding a pike. Next to him is the third brother, Jofre, afterwards Prince of Squillace in the kingdom of Naples. Very curious is the portrait of the eldest son, Don Pedro Luis, who had died in 1485. Pinturicchio has painted it above Jofre's heart, visible through a rent in his breast-plate.

The rooms selected by Julius for his own habitation were on the floor above, and were connected with the private chapel of Pope Alexander, the present Hall of the Immaculate Conception. Among the artists collected by Bramante for their decoration was Raphael, then only twenty-five and practically unknown, whose superiority to the rest soon became so obvious that in 1509 Julius entrusted him with the entire work, which was still in progress, not only when Julius was succeeded by Leo X in 1513, but also on Raphael's own death in 1520.

This marvellous series of frescoes constitutes Raphael's greatest achievement, though in many instances his work is partly or even chiefly confined to the design: for example, the defeat of the Saracens at Ostia, and the Purgation of Leo III. The Coronation of Charlemagne, painted by Francesco Penni, was probably not even designed by him, and the huge Battle of the Milvian Bridge, painted after his death from one of his sketches, is entirely by Giulio Romano, who was as poor a colourist as he was a successful draughtsman. Penni is also responsible for the Donation of Constantine—chiefly interesting for its view of the interior of old St. Peter's—and the scene of the Emperor's legendary baptism in S. Giovanni in Fonte, in each of which St. Sylvester is an indifferent portrait of Clement VII.

The fourth great picture in the same room, the Vision of Constantine, is again by Giulio Romano: in the background are the Pons Aelius, the mausoleum of Hadrian, and the so-called Meta Romuli, then still existing in the Borgo. The grotesque dwarf in the foreground is a portrait of a favourite jester of Clement's while still Cardinal de' Medici. His name was Gradasso, and the contemporary poet Berni says of him,

Se si trovava colla spada ai fianchi
Quando i topi assaltarono i ranocchi
Egli era fatto condottier de' granchi! [1]

The first of the series from the hand of Raphael himself is the absurdly named Disputa. The influence of Perugino, as well as of the traditional conventions of earlier times, is still apparent in this picture, though not sufficiently to obscure the painter's own original genius. Julius had laid the foundation-stone of Bramante's new St. Peter's, the Saturday *in albis* (April 18), 1506—a dramatic event commemorated in the present fresco, where the upper portion suggests the splendid apse of the new cathedral. On the right is a portion of freshly erected wall: on the left, one observes in the distance a church in process of building and surrounded by scaffoldings. The altar in the centre, which has the shape of a foundation-stone, and is inscribed with the name of Julius, is, with the Monstrance upon it, the focal point of the whole picture, which thus ingeniously avoids the sense of incongruity usually produced by the juxtaposition of natural and supernatural events. The visible presence of Christ on earth as in heaven, and the greatness of the Pope's

[1] "*Had he been there with trenchant blade*
When mice and frogs in war contended,
A brave crab-captain he'd have made!"

undertaking, which "the Holy Trinity, the heavenly host, and all Christendom throughout the ages" are invited to witness, are equally and brilliantly indicated.

On either side of the altar are seated the four great Doctors of the Church—St. Gregory, St. Jerome, St. Ambrose and St. Augustine—whose attitudes, as Klacsko suggests, signify respectively faith, research, enthusiasm and doctrinal exposition. The picture contains numerous portraits. The gentle-featured friar with silver hair on the extreme left is Fra Angelico: leaning on the balustrade with a book is the "Maestro Ruinante" himself. On the right, behind St. Augustine, come successively St. Thomas Aquinas, Innocent III, St. Bonaventure, Sixtus IV, and Dante. Next but one is Savonarola—executed at Florence as a heretic only ten years before! His devotion to the Sacrament, not to mention the fact that he had been a victim of Julius's enemy, Pope Borgia, is, however, a sufficient explanation for his inclusion.[1]

The fresco, however, has yet a further and deeper significance. By his acquaintance with Agostino Chigi and his circle, Raphael was intimately in touch with the most refined intellectuality of the age: and the entire decoration of the Stanza is thus a profoundly elaborate disquisition on a text which may be summed up in Milton's "How charming is divine philosophy!" The key is provided by the beautiful

[1] Few visitors, let us hope, find themselves so astray, geographically and esthetically, as the American lady, who, apparently under the impression that she was in the Sixtine, turned suddenly and alarmingly upon two of the writer's acquaintances (perfect strangers to her), and informed them in tones of kindly didacticism that the Disputa before them was one of Michelangelo's finest works, and represented the Last Judgement. "These," she added, pointing to the saintly company on the right of the altar, "*are the souls of the damned!*"

ceiling-figures [1] of Theology, Philosophy, Justice and Poetry, to each of which conceptions one of the four walls is dedicated. Sacred learning in the so-called Disputa faces profane learning in the so-called School of Athens, where, in a magnificent hall, in which we recognize an adaptation of Bramante's first design for St. Peter's, Apollo and Minerva, personifying art and wisdom, preside over an assembly of sages, of every age and clime, headed by Plato and Aristotle —the two great lights of classical and medieval learning, and the two poles, metaphysical and physical, of all philosophy.

The theme—I epitomize the brilliant exegesis of Professor Nogara—is the development of humanity under the influence of the spiritual elements which constitute its being and life. Man's first and principal faculty is intelligence, and this takes light from knowledge: first of all from theology, and secondly from philosophy, both of which must be sustained and governed by law. Hence jurisprudence defines the rights and duties of all, and shows how the excesses into which the will may be led by the passions may be restrained and corrected. Yet man cannot live solely by knowledge: he needs other food, to nourish his imagination and warm his heart: and hence the arts, especially music and poetry, which represent the eternal youth of life.

Among the sages Socrates and Diogenes are easily recognized. On the extreme right are Raphael himself, and his friend and fellow-painter, Sodoma; while Bramante, representing either Euclid or Archimedes, demonstrates with a pair of compasses a problem in geometry. Between him and the two artists are Zarathustra and Ptolemy—astronomy and geography—the latter's crown being due to a confusion between the geographer and the homonymous kings of

[1] By Bramantino, according to Venturi. They were formerly attributed to Sodoma.

Egypt. Heraclitus sits in profound meditation, his elbow supported on a block of marble: Pythagoras writes his harmonic tables, while an Oriental—perhaps Averrhoes or Hermes Trismegistus—peers over his shoulder, and Epicurus, his hair wreathed with vine-leaves, uses a marble pedestal for a reading-desk.

The curly haired child who looks out towards us between Epicurus and Averrhoes is the youthful Federigo, the ten-year-old heir of Francesco Gonzaga, marquis of Mantua, who, taken prisoner at Legnano in 1509, had been released by Julius on condition that Federigo was handed over to him as a hostage. He remained with Julius till the Pope's death, and was the constant companion of his walks or rides. In the evenings they played backgammon together, or supped with Agostino Chigi in the gardens of his new villa beside the Tiber: during the Pope's severe illness in July, 1511, no one save Federigo could persuade him to eat or take his medicine. An unsupported tradition identifies the tall and graceful youth in white and gold near by as Julius's nephew, Francesco Maria della Rovere, duke of Urbino.[1]

Of the two other walls, one is devoted to Law, both civil and ecclesiastic. On the right, Gregory IX—a portrait of Julius—issues the Decretals, while, below, Moses shows to the Israelites the Tables of the Law: on the left (by Pierin del Vaga) are Justinian giving the Pandects to Trebonius, and Solon addressing the Athenians. Above in the lunette, Raphael has painted Fortitude, Prudence, and Moderation. Surrounding the seated figure of the Pope are his destined successor, Cardinal de' Medici, Cardinal Alessandro Farnese (afterwards Paul III), and an unidentified personage who bears an extraordinary resemblance to

[1] See pp. 115, 143.

Napoleon I. The Arts, on the opposite wall, are represented by the lovely scene of Mount Parnassus, where, surrounded by the Muses and their disciples, from Homer and Dante to the contemporary poet, Sannazaro, Apollo evokes the "hidden soul of harmony" beneath the shade of the laurels. The ingenuity with which Raphael has triumphed over the awkwardness of the available space is remarkable.

In these pictures we see what powers Raphael had acquired during his sojourn at Florence: in the following room, the Stanza d'Eliodoro, his artistic genius, stimulated by the example of Michelangelo's work in the Sixtine, reaches its utmost pitch of development. The paintings here bear on the political events of the time. The Mass of Bolsena, a masterpiece in which Raphael was probably assisted by Sebastian del Piombo, was most likely painted in consequence of a vow made by Julius during a visit to Orvieto in 1506, and refers to the famous miracle of the Holy Wafer which in 1263 convinced a Bohemian priest of the reality of Transubstantiation. Behind the kneeling Julius—one of Raphael's finest portraits—is Cardinal Riario, elderly and red-faced, the builder of the Cancellaria.

On the wall to the left is the story of Heliodorus, treasurer of Seleucus Philopator, King of Syria, as told in the Book of the Maccabees. Ordered by the King to seize the treasures of the temple of Jerusalem, he was expelled by the apparition of an angelic horseman attended by two youths armed with rods, who trampled him under foot and put his followers to flight. In the background, the High Priest, Onias, gives thanks for the divine intervention. The painting most probably commemorates the victory of the Church established by Julius at the Lateran Council in 1512. On the left, seated in his *sedia gestatoria*, the Pope

watches in stern triumph the discomfiture of his enemies. The foremost bearer is a portrait of the celebrated engraver, Marcantonio Raimondi, while the heavenly cavalier is believed to be a reminiscence of the beautiful youth, Astorre dei Baglioni, whom Raphael, then a pupil in Perugino's *bottega*, had probably seen holding single-handedly the piazza at Perugia against his hereditary foes, the Oddi, in 1495.

The scene of Leo I saving Rome from Attila in 453 seems to be chiefly the work of Francesco Penni. It is an allusion to the battle of Ravenna in 1512, which compelled the French to withdraw from Italy. The Pope should have been a portrait of Julius, but his death before the completion of the picture entailed the substitution of his successor, Leo X, who, as Cardinal de' Medici, had been taken prisoner in the battle. His release is alluded to by Raphael in the painting of St. Peter's liberation from prison by an angel, which is celebrated especially for its handling of the various light effects—the smoky glare of the torch, the dim rays of the moon, and the radiance emitted by the angel.

The last fresco upon which Raphael himself worked is that which gives its name to the Stanza dell' Incendio, and which depicts Leo IV quenching a conflagration in the Borgo by making the sign of the cross from one of the windows of the Vatican. The façade of old St. Peter's, then still intact, is seen in the background. On the left, Raphael has introduced a passage from the Aeneid—the escape of Aeneas from the burning of Troy, with his aged father and his wife and his little son. The famous Loggie, though doubtless designed and directed by him, were entirely executed by his pupils, particularly Giulio Romano and Giovanni da Udine. The series of gay little pictures is a model of what good illustration should be. Equally de-

lightful are the stuccoes on the walls, where classical motives are interspersed with other subjects—an old workman, a painter grinding his colours—chosen at random by the artist from the teeming life about him.

In 1508 Michelangelo had begun the astounding design of the ceiling which, above all else, renders the Sixtine chapel a synonym for the supreme artistic achievement of human genius. The centre portion was completed in twenty-two months, and by the end of October, 1512, the entire work was finally revealed, to the immense satisfaction of Julius, and the almost stupefied admiration of the multitudes who flocked to behold it. Altogether apart from the infinite imagination which informs the whole vast design, one is staggered by the mere labour involved in covering single-handedly, under the most fatiguing conditions, 10,000 square feet of a ceiling very ill-adapted for the purpose, containing nearly three hundred and fifty figures, in every conceivable attitude, and many of them three times larger than life, yet finished with the utmost exactitude, even down to the smallest details.

In these paintings, Michelangelo shows himself divided by an immeasurable gulf from all who before him had treated the same or similar subjects. At a stroke he repudiates all the theatrical wardrobe of costumes and attributes which had hitherto been considered indispensable. The subsidiary episodes which, with earlier painters, fill the backgrounds of their pictures, are here entirely eliminated: each scene stands alone, a miracle of dramatic force and harmonious composition.

"Other artists," says Cecchelli, "had shrunk from representing nude figures in scenes of a sacred character: Michelangelo, on the contrary, places them in the foreground, and shows that the nude, in the subjects treated by him, is far removed from sensuality, since, thanks to the

simplest expression, purest as least adorned, it transports us into an ideal world of truth and beauty."

Framed in an elaborately architectonic setting, not a detail of which is devoid of significant purpose, the tragedy of creation unfolds. From the first scene, where the waves of primeval night roll sullenly back before the imperious arm-sweep of God, rising like Demogorgon from the abyss, to the last, where Noah lies in drunken slumber, unconscious of his shame, an atmosphere of gloom and suffering broods over the entire gigantic conception. The spark flashes through the limbs of Adam from the finger of God, sweeping down towards him on the whirlwind, but there is no joy of newborn vitality in his features, but only sadness and resignation to the destiny in store for him. From the shelter of God's embrace, Wisdom, His companion "from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was," regards the first of mankind with eyes filled with melancholy prescience.

The prophets seem weighed down with terrible foreknowledge. Jeremiah's mighty shoulders are bowed despairingly beneath the burden: the gesture of Hezekiah is one of passionate expostulation: Jonah starts back imploringly from the impending doom: anxiety gathers yet more darkly on the countenance of Isaiah as he listens to the angelic message. Vainly the Sibyls search their mysterious writings, as though in hope of finding some way of escape from the ineluctable decree of fate. Even the humble ancestors of Christ seem to await a future, not bright with glorious hope, but dark with obscure menace. "On the Sixtine ceiling," writes Venturi, "Michelangelo tells the story of a great, fallen, oppressed humanity, dogged by sin and death, in arms against destiny."

The sole contrast is provided by the seated male figures

—genii or demi-gods—that extend, living sculptures rather than paintings, from end to end of the central vault. Upon these glorious forms, one feels, time has no power, and their beauty, laughing or contemplative or touched with a wonder that is almost pity, is one into which the soul, with all her maladies, has never passed.

The Last Judgement, painted between 1536 and 1541, forms the inevitable sequel to the human tragedy as conceived by the gloomy and despairing spirit of Michelangelo. It is the doom, not the redemption, of humanity that is emphasized. Terror, menace and despair are the keynotes of the entire composition. Relentless and terrible, Christ does not so much as vouchsafe a glance to the saints and martyrs who turn to him in mute appeal, as though in doubt lest even they be found unworthy of the Paradise for which they have striven and suffered. His right hand upraised in a gesture of irrevocable repudiation, his eyes sternly fixed upon the wicked, he pronounces the appalling words, "Depart from Me, ye accursed!" Beside him cowers the Virgin, seeming to shrink from contact with the spirits that press timidly towards the judgement seat: on either side, St. Peter and St. Paul, Herculean figures, half savage and half submissive, resemble executioners rather than Apostles.

Below, on the left, the graves give up their dead at the compulsion of the tremendous summons—*tuba mirum spargens sonum:* the dry bones clothe themselves horribly with flesh: like withered leaves before the whirlwind, the bodies rise into the air. On the right, some of the wicked struggle vainly against their doom, while others are dragged helplessly downward to where Charon awaits them, with eyes like rings of livid flame. Among the former, one observes the figure of a man who falls, head foremost, still clutching the twin keys of Papal dominion. Is he perhaps intended

by the painter to represent the Medici Popes who, in his eyes, had enslaved his beloved Florence, or merely to serve for all such as had from time to time unworthily occupied the Chair of Peter?

Amid the general chorus of admiration evoked by the work, voices were nevertheless heard denouncing the nudity of the figures—a prudery which eventually caused many of them to be daubed with preposterous garments under Paul III's successors. Among these narrow-minded critics was Paul's master of ceremonies, Biagio da Cesena, on whom the artist avenged himself by depicting him—nude likewise!—in the left lower corner of the fresco as Minos, the judge of the damned, with serpent's tail and ass's ears. The enraged official complained to the amused Paul, who replied that to release him from hell was beyond the power even of a Pope!

CHAPTER XVII

S. LORENZO FUORI: THE UNDERGROUND BASILICA

EARLY on a cold, wet morning of November, 1347, the bells of the city rang a wild alarm. Snatching up their weapons, the Romans, some on foot, some on horseback, hurried towards the ancient Porta Tiburtina—close to the present tramway-station for Tivoli—where the barons and their retainers had arrived from Palestrina, bent on putting an end to Cola di Rienzi and his "Buono Stato." Finding the gate closed, however, they were already retiring, when its sudden opening by the Romans for the purposes of a sortie tempted young Giovanni Colonna to ride in alone. His father, following in search of him, found him lying dead, surrounded by a ferocious mob, and was himself struck down and killed. The deaths of the two Colonna precipitated a general struggle: for a moment the issue hung in doubt: then the barons and their followers gave way, and the battle became a massacre. More than eighty great nobles were butchered, and the power of the barons, who had so long ruled Rome at their pleasure, was shattered for ever.

With such memories in one's thoughts, one passes by the ancient gateway, and arrives, a few yards further on, at the modern Porta S. Lorenzo. Though the Via Tiburtina is scarcely one of Rome's most attractive thoroughfares, the visitor who traverses it on his way to S. Lorenzo fuori will be repaid to some extent if he looks out for a certain

house, belonging to a mortuary mason, about half-way down on the left-hand side. Glancing up to the first floor, he will find himself face to face with a middle-aged gentleman —presumably the proprietor—and his family, who are regarding him with beaming smiles from a window. Only after a moment's surprise will he realize that the genial trio are the work of the ingenious mason, who has adopted this original method of advertising his skill!

One of the most interesting of the major Roman churches, S. Lorenzo has also, fortunately, remained surprisingly unchanged since the Middle Ages. It is usually said to have been formed by knocking together two churches of different periods, which had been built apse to apse, like Hadrian's twin temples of Venus and Roma. This theory was originally formulated by De Rossi, but its incorrectness was conclusively demonstrated, as far back as 1913, by the late Professor Santi Pesarini.[1]

The church stands on part of an ancient burial-ground in the Campus Veranus, of which the great cemetery of the Campo Verano, close by, is the modern descendant. Here, above the tomb of the martyred St. Lawrence, Constantine in the fourth century erected a small basilica, which appears to have been of very modest dimensions, little more, indeed, than a simple crypt, like those of St. Agnes on the Via Nomentana, and of SS. Marcellinus and Petrus on the Via Labicana. Nearly three centuries later, when the relics of the protomartyr, St. Stephen, were likewise transferred hither, Pope Pelagius II rebuilt the church completely from the foundations.

The Pelagian church occupied the site of the present presbytery, and consisted of the (now) lower church, containing the tomb of St. Lawrence and the modern sarco-

[1] *Studi Romani,* Ann. I, fasc. i, 1913.

phagus of Pius IX. It is constructed in the barbarous style of the sixth century with columns and fragments removed from ancient Roman buildings: the apse, facing west, projected to a point situated between the two ambones of the present and later nave. From the mosaics of the triumphal arch that once gave entrance to the transept, the portrait of Pelagius still looks down, accompanied by an inscription alluding to the "hostile swords" of the Lombards, who were then spreading terror and ruin throughout Italy, and threatening destruction to Rome itself.

As at S. Agnese, one still sees the ancient lateral galleries (*matronaea*) for the female worshippers. Since the basilica Pelagiana stood against the side of a hill, the entrance was from the side, and the late twelfth-century cloisters—of great charm—occupy the site of the original atrium.

The first transformation of the church was effected early in the thirteenth century by the Savelli Pope, Honorius III, who pulled down the apse, constructed the present presbytery at a level considerably above that of the Pelagian basilica, and added the existing nave and porch. In 1217, Pierre de Courtenay, grandson of the French king, Louis the Fat, was summoned to the throne of Constantinople, and received the Imperial crown in the basilica from the hands of Honorius: the only occasion on which a Byzantine Emperor was crowned by a Pope. Unfortunately, de Courtenay did not long survive his new greatness, for before reaching his capital he was captured by Theodore, despot of Albania, and died in prison. His son, Baldwin, last of the Latin emperors, was expelled from Constantinople by Michael Palaeologus.

The coronation of the Emperor, an event naturally of the highest importance, is commemorated in the small mosaics on the architrave of the porch, which is the work

of the Vassalecti.[1] In the upper row is Christ between St. Cyriaca and St. Stephen: in the lower, are St. Lawrence and Pope Honorius, with Pierre de Courtenay kneeling before him. The same scene is represented, to the left of the right-hand portal, in one of the remarkable series of frescoes, executed later in the same century, which cover the interior of the porch. Those on the entrance wall concern the lives and legends of SS. Lawrence and Stephen. On the right wall is shown how a monk saw a crowd of demons hastening to seize the soul of the newly deceased Emperor, Henry II, who was, however, saved by the intervention of St. Lawrence. The opposite wall relates how the sacristan of the church, early one morning, found it filled with phantoms, who were attending a Mass celebrated by St. Peter, St. Lawrence, and St. Stephen. St. Lawrence bade the sacristan tell the Pope of his vision, giving him, as proof, his own girdle, which convinced the Pope by raising a corpse to life.

The two sarcophagi to right and left of the central portal are said to have been those of Pope Zosimus and Pope Sixtus III, the builder of S. Maria Maggiore. The other two, resembling temples, are rare examples of Christian sarcophagi of the eleventh or twelfth century. Above the door is the Guelf emblem of an eagle gripping a serpent or dragon. In the centre of the Cosmatesque paving of the nave is a curious mosaic of two Savelli knights, whose heaumes are adorned with a griffin and a lion rampant—a mark of extraordinary honour, since the griffin was an emblem sent by the Pope only to Christian princes. Of the emblems in the angles, the griffins entwined perhaps signify brotherly love: in another corner are two dragons fleeing

[1] G. Biasiotti, "I mosaici del Portico di S. Lorenzo" (comunicazione letta alla Pont. Accad. Rom. di Archeol. 28 febb., 1913).

from the Sacrament, while the lion overcoming a dragon signifies the victory of Christ over Satan.

Despite the modern frescoes of the nave, the whole appearance of the church is one of great antiquity—the massive columns, the two beautiful ambones and Paschal candle-stick, the richly inlaid throne. Behind the Gospel ambo is the column with a capital carved with a lizard and a frog in the volutes, which, as already mentioned, may have been taken from the Portico of Octavia. The beautiful ciborium, signed by John, Peter, Angelus and Saxus, "sons of Paul," is possibly the earliest signed example of a type widely spread throughout Latium and the Sabina. On the right wall of the crypt is the epitaph of a certain Landolphus, the young son of the Dux Johannes and the Senatrix Theodora, who is evidently a descendant of the earlier and more famous Senatrix of the same name, mother of the dreaded Marozia. Landolphus appears to have been killed—*vulnere fossus*—in 963: that is to say, during the wild reign of John XII, whose career of violence and debauchery came to a fitting end when he was knocked on the head—so it is said—by an angry husband with whose wife he had made an assignation beyond the walls.

An ancient sarcophagus, sculptured with a Roman wedding, and surmounted by a medieval tabernacle, shelters the remains of Cardinal Guglielmo Fieschi, whose name is a vivid reminder of the long duel to the death between the medieval Papacy and the Imperial House of Hohenstaufen. His uncle, Count Sinibald of Lavagna, formerly one of the staunchest supporters of Frederic II, became the Emperor's relentless enemy on his election as Innocent IV. "I have lost a good friend," said Frederic gloomily, on hearing the result of the Conclave, "for no Pope can remain a Ghibelline."

During Frederic's siege of Viterbo in 1244, Fieschi was almost the sole companion of Innocent when he fled from Rome in disguise, and rode, scarcely drawing rein, across the savage intervening country to Cività Vecchia and the sea. Ten years later, failing to entangle Frederic's son, Manfred, by duplicity, he attempted to crush him by force at Foggia, and was utterly defeated. With a mere handful of followers, he reached Naples barely in time to announce the disaster to the expiring Innocent, and encourage the terrified cardinals to elect a successor.

From S. Lorenzo it is no great distance to the imposing Porta Maggiore—originally erected by Claudius to carry his new aqueducts, the Aqua Claudia and Anio Novus, and given monumental form because standing at the junction of two roads, the Via Labicana and the Via Prenestina. It was not till the reign of Aurelian, two centuries later, that it became a true gateway, subsequently fortified by Honorius with flanking towers which have now been destroyed. In the reign of Claudius the great walls of Aurelian were unnecessary and undreamed of, and the splendid archway stood in a tranquil solitude beyond the limits of the city, surrounded by tombs and gardens.

On the exterior of the gate is the large and singular monument of a wealthy baker named M. Virgilius Eurysaces, who had made his fortune chiefly out of Government contracts. Built in imitation of grain-sacks, with oil-jars piled above them, the tomb is decorated at the top with a frieze illustrative of the various processes of making and selling bread—an interesting example of the art of the last century of the Republic. A marble slab sculptured with the portraits of the baker and his wife Atistia, which was found on the site, is now attached to a neighbouring wall.

The Porta Maggiore.

In the Via Prenestina, a few yards away, is the modern entrance to one of the strangest and most important monuments that the ancient world has bequeathed to us—a complete underground basilica, discovered in 1919 while carrying out repairs to the railway-line above. When first excavated, it was in extraordinarily good preservation, but the damp, which it seems almost impossible to check, has since caused appreciable deterioration to the innumerable reliefs, exquisitely wrought in stucco, which cover the walls and ceiling. The effect, as one enters, is wonderfully impressive, and one can scarcely believe, as one surveys the lofty nave, with its rounded apse and lateral aisles, that the building was not intended for Christian worship. Only the character of the reliefs dispels the illusion, while heightening the profound interest aroused by the mystery of the place's origin and purpose.

Of the many suggestions advanced in explanation of this singular sanctuary, the most satisfactory is that it belonged to the family of a wealthy patrician named T. Statilius Taurus, whose gardens in the vicinity of the Porta Maggiore were coveted by the Empress Agrippina, the second wife of Claudius. In order to possess herself of them, she caused him in A.D. 44 to be accused, first of maladministration and of corrupting the army, and, when he had successfully repelled this charge, of secretly practising magical and forbidden rites. This last accusation, which drove him in despair to kill himself, would seem to contain a certain substratum of truth, in so far as the hall appears to have been the meeting-place of a neo-Pythagorean sect—a cult officially discountenanced by Roman law. The reliefs, which, as Mrs. Strong points out, form "a chart, as it were, of the adventures of the soul," belong to a familiar cycle of subjects symbolizing "the aspiration of the soul towards

the divine, her liberation from earthly ties, and her final flight towards the celestial spheres."

Thus, while the figure of Ganymede in the centre of the nave ceiling typifies the apotheosis of the soul initiated into the sacred mysteries, and joyfully emptying the last dregs of mortality from the vessel in his hand, the consequences of folly or sin are suggested by the representation of the Danaidae at their unending task, or of Agave madly brandishing the bloody head of the impious Pentheus. Bacchic scenes, or panels of playing children, symbolize the joys of the eternal Paradise: the mask of Oceanus above the portal hints at the purification of the soul, and at the Isles of the Blest that lie beyond the wide Ocean-stream.

The doctrine that only by initiation could the soul find peace in death and happiness beyond the grave is repeated, sometimes in obscure, sometimes in unmistakable language, by relief after relief, and finds its most impressively dramatic expression in the remarkable relief that occupies the apse. Upon a rocky isle, surrounded by an angry sea, Apollo stands, his right arm extended in encouraging invitation towards the veiled figure of Sappho—here symbolizing the purified soul—who clasps the Apolline lyre in her hand as a dying saint might clasp the crucifix. A winged Love gently urges her into the waves, where a Triton awaits her with a veil, the curve of which suggests a boat, while another peals a triumphant welcome from his conch. It is like the death of Mr. Valiant-for-Truth in the *Pilgrim's Progress*—"*So he passed over, and all the trumpets sounded for him on the other side.*"

But what of the male figure who sits upon a rock on the other side of the picture, and whose head is sunk between his hands in an attitude of profound despair? One is at once reminded of Michelangelo's Last Judgement—the terrible

figure of the sinner who, huddled in an almost identical attitude of hopeless woe, sinks irrevocably downward *nelle tenebre eterne, in caldo e in gelo.*[1] He is the uninitiated soul, whom no radiant deity awaits, for whom no kindly spirits are at hand to guide and support him among the waves of death. Could the contrast be more vividly presented, or in terms of greater simplicity and beauty?

Clearly it is not alone by its architectural form that this unique example of a pre-Christian basilica devoted to religious purposes recalls the beliefs and hopes of Christianity. Even the suggestion that salvation may be attained by repentance, though at the eleventh hour, is not wanting, as is clear from two panels which depict the legend of Marsyas. In the first, we see Marsyas warned by a Muse against the daring impiety of challenging the deity "of whom music and song and blood are pure." In the second, bound to a tree, he awaits with hanging head the divine retribution, while another Muse casts herself on her knees before Apollo and implores him to pardon the offender. It is written, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God: yet, even at the last, the sinner who truly repents may hope for forgiveness.

Save for the reliefs, the basilica was completely empty when excavated, and indeed the absence of any signs of blackening by smoke—though it was evidently intended to be illuminated by torches—seems to show that it was abandoned almost as soon as constructed. There is reason to think that a seat for the principal hierophant, like the episcopal throne in a Christian church, once stood against the wall of the apse. The curious cavity in the apse floor, too irregular to have been the site of a baptismal font, has found no satisfactory explanation. Close to the entrance are the foundations of the altar, in outline resembling an

[1] "To the eternal darkness, to fire and ice."

animal with outstretched paws; perhaps on account of actual animal sacrifices, since the skeletons of two pigs and a dog —animals sacred to the chthonic powers—were actually found within the building.

The original entrance, now blocked up, consisted of a long gallery, leading to the little atrium before the entrance. No doubt, as has been suggested, the contrast between the dark and downward approach and the brightness and beauty of the basilica was intentional and symbolic. Even so, the initiate would pass the gloomy portals of the grave—the *atra ianua Ditis*—and enter the heavenly regions of eternal light and life.

CHAPTER XVIII

ON THE APPIAN WAY

OCCUPYING the valley between the Caelian and the pseudo-Aventine is the beautiful park known as the Passeggiata Archeologica, a pleasant place in which to dream or saunter. Fragments of ancient walls glow softly, here and there, in the bright sun, and between the trees tower the mighty ruins of the Thermae Antoninianae, amid whose then flower-mantled solitudes Shelley once watched

from dawn to gloom
The yellow bees in the ivy-bloom.

For me the park is for ever associated with as fairy-like a spectacle as one could wish for on a May morning—a tiny, curly headed mite, perhaps three years old, bare-legged and bare-armed, and dancing solemnly by herself upon the grass. This way and that she stepped, swaying her diminutive skirt with chubby finger-tips, and oblivious of everything but the music of her own imaginings, while her obviously adoring father watched her from beneath a tree.

Through the Passeggiata a modern thoroughfare more or less follows the course of the road made by Caracalla as an approach to the great Baths, while between the park and the Caelian runs the Appian Way, the great southern road built in 312 B.C. by the blind censor, Appius Claudius. First and most famous of the magnificent military arteries by which Rome consolidated her growing Empire, it extended first to Capua, and eventually to Brundusium (Brindisi).

The "queen of roads," as Statius called it, it was still in perfect condition after eight centuries, when it excited the enthusiasm of the Greek historian, Procopius. A little within the park a small ruined building marks the site of the Porta Capena in the Servian wall, whence the great highway set forth on its long march to the Adriatic. Since burial within the city limits was strictly forbidden, the Via Appia, like all Roman roads, was bordered with countless tombs, often of great magnificence, besides splendid villas and gardens. A grimmer spectacle greeted the traveller after the great slave insurrection of Spartacus, when six thousand of his defeated followers were impaled beside the road. Up the Via Appia came St. Paul on his way from Puteoli to the capital, and from the Porta Capena the brethren in Rome set out to meet the Apostle at Forum Appii and the Three Taverns.

With the exception of the great Baths, the classical remains in the Passeggiata need not, perhaps, detain us, though it is of interest to note that the church of S. Balbina, with its beautiful throne and the tomb of Stefano de Surdis, chaplain of Boniface VIII, was probably once a hall in the palace—of which there are considerable traces—inhabited by Q. Fabius Cilo, a close friend of the Emperor Severus. Close beside the Via Appia is the little chapel of S. Maria del Buon Consiglio, where a hermit used to live until late in the last century, while opposite the Baths is the ancient church of SS. Nereus and Achilles, rebuilt by Leo III. Besides beautiful work by the Cosmati, it contains an interesting ninth-century mosaic, strongly Byzantine in character, of the Transfiguration.

The neighbourhood, indeed, abounds in monuments of the Middle Ages. The church of S. Sisto no longer retains anything of interest save its thirteenth-century campanile,

but S. Cesareo, a little beyond the Passeggiata, not only contains perhaps the loveliest examples in Rome of the art of the medieval *marmorarii*, but is interesting as having witnessed the election of Eugenius III in 1145 after Lucius II had perished in an attack on the Capitol. Somewhat further away, at the Porta Latina, are two curious churches dedicated to St. John the Evangelist, or rather a church and a small chapel—the latter a graceful trifle by Bramante, which replaces a far earlier structure marking the supposed site of St. John's martyrdom.

More interesting is the church, which stands close to an ancient tomb on the opposite side of the road, from which it is practically concealed by a high wall. Of very ancient origin, S. Giovanni a Porta Latina was rebuilt first about 772, and again in 1191. Amid the trees and bushes that cluster confusedly before the porch is an old well, its marble lip scarred with the usage of a thousand years. An atmosphere of solitude and oblivion broods over the whole place, as upon some deserted backwater in the stream of time.

The ancient columns of the nave, of various styles and materials, support Ionic capitals that are possibly the work of the Cosmati. Below the open timber roof a series of faded frescoes of the twelfth century represent the usual concordance between the Old and New Testaments, but in a somewhat unusual style. In the division of light from darkness, for example, the Deity, young and beardless, leans from heaven, his hands outstretched above two small figures in mandorlas—one red, one white—representing the sun and moon, while the Holy Spirit below moves upon the face of the waters, in which various uncouth monsters are writhing. Equally curious is the scene in which God breathes the breath of life into Adam through a long tube,

much as one might inflate a football. The tube in the fresco is now faded almost beyond recognition, but there is an exact replica of the scene among the wonderful contemporary mosaics of Monreale in Sicily.

Let us, however, return tot he great *thermæ* built by Severus and Caracalla—once the most luxurious in Rome, despite the fact that they were chiefly frequented by the poorer classes of the Roman population. Nothing in Rome is more impressive than the sheer proportions of these immense ruins, of which the swimming-bath alone could accommodate about sixteen hundred bathers simultaneously. One passes to the vast central hall beyond, and tries in vain to picture it in all its former magnificence of soaring column and coffered vault, its walls and pavements of precious marbles, its window-grilles of Corinthian bronze, its heavy curtains of costly stuffs, its statues and fountains and glittering mosaics. Beyond are the remains of the domed and circular *calidarium*, or vapour bath, with great windows facing west so as to achieve the maximum degree of heat in the afternoon, the favourite time for bathing.

Surrounding the three principal portions of the building are a host of other apartments, impossible now to identify with certainty. They included, not only rooms for every imaginable type of bath, both public and private, but lecture-halls, libraries, dressing-rooms, gymnasia. At the back was a huge exercise-ground, with a kind of grandstand for the onlookers, while all round the enormous building extended avenues and gardens, adorned with fountains and statuary: the whole being enclosed within high walls, which in front took the form of a two-storied portico with shops on the ground floor.

Below the baths are a perfect labyrinth of underground passages, by which the thousands of slaves in attendance

could pass quickly from one part of the vast structure to another. On the north-west side has been discovered a remarkable Mithraeum, the largest in Rome. A short passage gives access to a circular pit, whose mouth was originally covered by a metal grating. On special occasions a bull would have been slaughtered above the grating, its blood falling in showers upon the worshipper beneath, who, his sins thus washed away, was reborn to eternal life (*in eternum renatus*).

The Baths of Caracalla were only one among many such establishments in Rome: indeed, those of Diocletian, erected about eighty years later, were almost twice as large, having accommodation for nearly two thousand six hundred bathers. These immense establishments, with all their astounding profusion of art and luxury—not to mention their hygienic value—were practically free to all. Though raised a little under the later Empire, the average price of admission was only a quadrans—a copper coin worth about two and a half centesimi in modern Italian currency, or, roughly speaking, one-sixteenth of a penny!

Returning to our car, we soon reach the tombs once belonging to the great and famous family of the Scipios, whose antiquity is evidenced by the fact that, like the earliest inhabitants of Rome, they buried, instead of burning, their dead. Despite recent extensive—and expensive—restorations, the shameful maltreatment to which they were subjected in the eighteenth century has rendered them scarcely worth visiting. Their custodian, however, is also in charge of a small but interesting columbarium: i.e. a tomb-chamber to which the niches in the walls, containing the cinerary urns, impart a certain resemblance to a dovecote. Sometimes a columbarium belonged entirely to a single family, sometimes to a burial club; sometimes—as, appar-

ently, here—it was constructed simply as a speculation, the niches being sold to anyone requiring them.

This columbarium was founded by a certain Pomponius Hylas and his wife, who lived in the reign of Tiberius, and whose own memorial, adorned with two griffins on either side of a lyre, meets us as we descend the stairs. A graceful design of vine-spirals and Cupids covers the stuccoed ceiling, and small shrines, likewise decorated with stucco and painting, project from the walls. Examination of the frescoes shows such subjects as Hercules and Cerberus, Oknos weaving a rope of hay in ignorance that an ass is devouring it behind his back—a symbol of the futility of human endeavour—and the centaur Chiron instructing Achilles in the use of the lyre. Most conspicuous is the fresco on the shrine in the apse, where Orpheus, attired in the long robe of a hierophant, chants to the strain of a harp, while an attendant humbly proffers a box, doubtless containing objects connected with the Orphic cult. On the right, a satyr, bearing the thyrsus, runs toward the singer, while on the left a crouching Bacchante is evidently stirred to frenzy by the mystic song, with its message of human immortality, and of the soul's path, through purification, to its divine home.

A little further on, in the Vigna Codini, are three other and larger columbaria. The first, occupied chiefly by the ashes of servants and freedmen, contains the inscription of a Court jester, dumb but witty (*mutus, argutus*), who, to amuse the melancholy Tiberius, hit on the device of burlesquing in pantomime the robustious lawyers tearing passion to tatters in the Forum. The second was evidently built in the time of Augustus, and most of the inscriptions relate to dependents of the Empress Livia or of other members of the Imperial family. The largest and most important is the

third, which would seem, from appearances, to have been used by people of a higher social standing. Travertine corbels, projecting from the wall, were intended for the support of temporary wooden balconies, so that relatives, visiting the place on the anniversary of a burial, might be able to reach the urns high up above the floor, and place perfumes or incense upon them.

Beyond the so-called Arch of Drusus—really an arch, decoratively treated, of the aqueduct supplying the Baths of Caracalla—we reach the Porta Appia, or Porta S. Sebastiano, as it has been called since the Middle Ages. Within the arch, on the right, is engraved a curious record of the fourteenth century—the figure of St. Michael trampling on the dragon, with an inscription commemorating the repulse in 1327 of the Neapolitans and the Orsini, who had attempted to seize the city by surprise in order to frustrate the entry and coronation of Ludwig of Bavaria. The gate, with its two massive and lofty flanking towers, and the great Aurelian wall, last and most enduring of Rome's defences, curving away on either side, is extraordinarily impressive, especially from without.

Nothing remains to-day of the temple of Mars which stood on the left just without the gate, and unfortunately the road still continues for the most part to run between high walls, which effectually block the view. Further on we cross the little stream popularly called Aquataccio—the brook Almo of classical times, in which the sacred stone of Cybele was annually washed by her worshippers. A sort of rude pyramid on the left, crowned by a peasant's hut, may be the remains of the tomb raised by the Empress Julia Domna to her murdered son, Geta. Opposite are the remains of another large tomb—perhaps that raised to his wife Priscilla by Abascantus, the favourite of Domitian, to

whom the poet Statius wrote a letter of sympathy, declaring that centuries would prove powerless against so splendid a monument!

The little, disused church of *Domine, Quo Vadis?* commemorates the legend, as beautiful as it is well known, that St. Peter, fleeing from persecution, beheld Christ standing before him, and, on asking amazedly, "Lord, whither goest Thou?" was abashed into turning back by the reply, "To Rome, to be crucified afresh!" It contains the plaster cast of a marble fragment with the supposed footprints of the Saviour: the original is at the church of S. Sebastiano, which we shall visit later, and we therefore keep straight on to the catacombs of St. Callixtus. There are more than forty catacombs in the vicinity of Rome, extending in a wide circle round the city, each a labyrinthine tangle of galleries, one above another, which—it has been estimated—would stretch for five or six hundred miles if joined end to end. At S. Callisto alone over fourteen miles of galleries have been explored, containing a total of something like two million graves. The cemetery was excavated in property belonging to the noble family of the Cecilii, which was among the first to be converted to Christianity.

A Trappist monk, released from his vow of life-long silence for the purpose, distributes tapers to his little flock, and leads the way underground into a damp and narrow passage, lined from floor to roof with tombs. Nowadays they are mostly empty, but occasionally, as one peers in, a few bones glimmer whitely in the feeble light of the taper. There are even *loculi* which have never been opened, the marble slab which seals them still engraved with symbols such as an anchor, a dove with an olive-spray, a palm or a fish: for the letters composing the Greek word *ichthus* (fish) are also the initials, in the same language, of the words

"Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour." With these are inscriptions, simple and touching,—"May thy soul be among the saints!", "Pray for thy parents!", "May God refresh thee!"

Here and there small oratories or chapels have been hewn out of the soft tufa, wherein the body of a martyr was laid within an arch-shaped recess, or *arcosolium*. Painted upon the walls and ceiling are dimly visible such subjects as the Good Shepherd, Jonah and the sea-monster, or Moses striking the rock. In one such chapel is the tomb where, guided by a dream, Paschal I, in 821, is said to have discovered the body of St. Cecilia. Not less interesting is another, once beautified with stucco and marbles, where many of the early Bishops [1] of Rome were buried. Here, in 258, Sixtus II, surprised by the Roman soldiers while celebrating mass, was cut down, together with his deacons, before the altar whose remains are yet to be seen.

These vast subterranean cemeteries were, of course, not excavated without the knowledge or permission of the Roman authorities: their existence was perfectly well known, and burial there was as legal as anywhere else. It was only in time of persecution that the Christians occasionally found in them a refuge wherein they might worship undisturbed, though even here they were sometimes tracked down by the police, and dragged away to imprisonment or martyrdom. So it came about that as time went on numerous secret exits were provided, as well as traps for the confusion of the enemy, such as stairs that terminated abruptly in a deep pit, and corridors that led nowhere. In some places, deep below the surface, cunningly masked openings still give access to quarries, even then abandoned for cen-

[1] The title of Pope did not come into use till towards the end of the fourth century.

turies, through whose crumbling galleries, buried in perpetual darkness, the refugees might eventually reach the upper air, safely out of sight of their watching persecutors.

With the triumph of Christianity catacomb burial fell into desuetude, and the catacombs for the most part were completely abandoned, their very whereabouts generally forgotten until rediscovered by De Rossi in the last century. None the less, they were apparently known in the fifteenth century to some at least of the members of the Roman Academy, including Cardinal Platina, the celebrated librarian of Sixtus IV and the historian of the Popes, and others almost equally eminent in learning and religion. Accused of reviving the worship of the pagan deities, and of plotting to place their founder, the famous Humanist, Pomponius Laetus, on the Papal throne, they were flung into S. Angelo by order of Paul II, but were eventually released for want of sufficient evidence.

In 1852, however, De Rossi discovered a chamber in the catacombs of S. Callisto, where Platina and his fellow neo-pagans had evidently been wont secretly to meet. Traced in candle-smoke on the white ceiling were—and still are—the names of these singular ecclesiastics, with an inscription proclaiming themselves "admirers of antiquity" and "the darlings of the courtesans of Rome," and referring to Pomponius by the Papal title of Pontifex Maximus! Similar records subsequently came to light in other catacombs. It is fortunate that these discoveries were not made four centuries earlier, otherwise such very ambiguous antiquarianism would have terminated abruptly at the headsman's block.

By this time, however—indeed, within two or three minutes of entering the catacomb—one has utterly lost one's bearings in this subterranean city of the dead, where

at every few yards fresh passages open out to wind mysteriously away into the bowels of the earth: and imagination plays unwillingly with the possibility of taking the wrong turning, and stumbling frantically, till one dropped from exhaustion, through the almost palpable blackness of the labyrinth. One behind the other the tiny yellow flames of the tapers go bobbing, while the voice of the monk echoes hollowly against the roof of the corridor. And then, suddenly—a long, steep flight of worn steps, and the glimmer of daylight at the top! With a sense of relief one emerges into the open air, and realizes that the sun is still shining brilliantly as ever in a sky of unclouded blue.

The catacombs of S. Sebastiano, now hardly worth a visit, were practically the only ones known in the Middle Ages. The name "catacomb" is derived from that of *ad catacumbas*—"in the hollows"—by which, from being situated at a much lower level than that of the road, the locality of the cemetery in which St. Sebastian was buried was generally known. The church is one of the seven pilgrim basilicas, and was built under Pope Damasus. It was originally dedicated to SS. Peter and Paul, whose bodies, according to a very ancient tradition, were temporarily deposited here—either immediately after their martyrdom, or during the persecution of the Emperor Valerian in the third century. An inscription by Damasus, now on the right of the nave, declares that here once "dwelt" (*habitasse*) the two Apostles. Up to a few years ago this was regarded merely as a poetical expression for the temporary sojourn of the bodies, but recent discoveries on the spot have placed the question in a new light, and a literal rendering of "habitasse" may yet prove to be the correct one.

The building of the church in the fourth century involved the partial destruction and complete concealment of a series

of extremely interesting monuments which have now been revealed by careful excavation. First in order of time are the extensive remains of a two-storied house, which may or may not have been the temporary abode of SS. Peter and Paul. It dates from the last years of the Republic and the first years of the Empire, and originally faced a road lying about forty feet below the level of the present basilica. That it was a house of some pretensions is evident from its fine mosaic pavements and tasteful frescoes, one of which gives us an interesting picture of a seaport, while a fragment of another—now in the little museum recently established in connection with the church—presents a curious "bird's-eye" view of a city, perhaps Rome itself.

Hewn out of the soft tufa rock on which the house was built are three tombs, faced with brick, and beautifully decorated with paintings and stucco. As an inscription shows, these tombs were made in the first century for a certain M. Clodius Hermes, but by the second half of the following century they had evidently passed into the hands of Christians, and it was in one of them that, according to the tradition already referred to, the bodies of the Apostles were deposited. It is at least noteworthy that in this tomb only one chamber was left entirely empty save for a single large sarcophagus, whereas everywhere else the available space was utilized to its utmost capacity. Indeed, a whole series of mausolea have been found, apparently constructed as close as possible to this particular tomb.

About the middle of the third century the site of the present church was partly occupied by a *triclia*: a kind of refreshment place, as it were, where, following a custom adopted from the pagans, pilgrims came to drink and pour libations in honour of the two Apostles. This *triclia* seems to have been in the form of a terrace or loggia, open on one

side, and commanding a view over the Campagna, then covered with luxurious villas and gardens. On the other sides were benches, backed with a wall painted to represent a trellis, with birds and flowers, and scrawled over everywhere by the pilgrims who visited the spot with appeals to the two Apostles to bear the two writers in mind.

It is clear that the building of the *triclia* was contemporary with a remarkable increase in the number of burials at this point of the Via Appia, among which was that of Fabianus, Bishop of Rome from 236 to 250. Apparently for some reason the spot had suddenly acquired, or revived, a reputation for unusual sanctity. It is interesting that the Calendar of Philocalus mysteriously hints at a connection of some kind between the martyrdom of SS. Peter and Paul and the year 258, while the Martyrology falsely attributed to St. Jerome mentions the feast of both Apostles as being honoured in that year *in catacumbis*. That the sacred bodies, for whatever reason, should have been transferred from their resting-places to the Via Appia is very improbable: especially since close by was a barracks of the special police, called *frumentarii*, who were particularly active in hunting down the Christians. It is much more conceivable that the bodies had been temporarily deposited *ad catacumbas* after the martyrdom of the saints—possibly because, to translate literally the words of Pope Damasus, they had formerly once resided there: and that in the third century, deterred by the persecution from approaching the actual tombs of the Apostles, the faithful flocked instead to the site on the Via Appia which had been sanctified by the residence of the saints both in life and death. The last word on the matter, however, has by no means been said.

Before leaving the church, we may give a glance at the legendary footprints of Christ from the church of "Domine,

Quo Vadis?": curtly dismissed by Marucchi as a medieval fake, but possibly a fragment of the threshold of some Roman building. From S. Sebastiano the road climbs steeply up the hill, passing the well-preserved remains of a great circus built by the Emperor Maxentius, the opponent of Constantine, in connection with his villa, which occupied a large area to the left of the road, including the splendid estate which had once belonged to the celebrated millionaire, Herodes Atticus. In the centre of the circus, with its two large towers, its triumphal arch at the far end, through which passed the victorious charioteers, and the Imperial tribune in the middle of the northern wall, was found the obelisk which now adorns the Piazza Navona. The remains of the *spina*, in the middle of which it stood, are still clearly visible. Nearer to the road, and enclosed within what was formerly a spacious portico, is the former tomb of the Emperor's young son, Romulus, against which a modern house has been built.

Dominating the crest of the hill is the immense round sepulchre of St. Cecilia's pagan ancestress, Cecilia Metella, whose father, Q. Cecilius Metellus, was awarded the title of Creticus for his conquest of Crete in 70 B.C. Her husband, Crassus, may have been the Crassus—grandson of the Triumvir—who shared the consulship with Augustus in 30 B.C. Known in the Middle Ages by the name of "Capo di Bove" from the bucrania sculptured on the frieze, the monument was turned into a fortress at an early date. About 1300 it became the property of the Caetani, the family of Boniface VIII, who established a small town at its foot, and enclosed the whole within battlemented walls. It is well worth while to go round to the back for the picturesque *ensemble* of the great tower and the castle buildings adjoining it, which, like the parish church of St. Nicholas

of Bari on the other side of the road, are in fairly good preservation. In 1589 the owners of the property actually obtained permission from Sixtus V to pull down the tomb for building material—a piece of vandalism fortunately averted by the prompt intervention of the Roman municipality, which generally seems to have protected the ancient monuments of Rome to the best of its ability.

Wonderfully beautiful is the panorama which reveals itself from the cross-roads just beyond the castle. On the one side is Rome, majestically enclosed within the dark-red girdle of the Aurelian wall, with the two ponderous towers of the Porta Appia, and, further to the right, the colossal statues of the Lateran gleaming in the sunshine: on the other, the rolling expanse of the Campagna, across which stride or stagger the receding arches of the ruined aqueducts, while in the distance rise the blue hills, their slopes dotted with little towns, and their summits, in winter-time, frequently crowned with dazzling snows. The Via Appia now follows the crest of a long ridge, with fields on either side: its double border of tombs alternated by cypress and umbrella-pine, beneath which fragments of architecture, mutilated inscriptions, and even the white effigies of the ancient dead, lie strewn and half-hidden amid the grasses and wild-flowers. In justice to the "queen of roads," one hastens to add that the remains of paving visible here and there are almost all of the Middle Ages.

Amid the fields on the right of the road a large temple-shaped tomb is possibly that of St. Urban, Bishop of Rome and friend of St. Cecilia, whose martyrdom took place near here in 230. The so-called tombs of the Horatii, further on, constitute one of the most picturesque bits along the Appian Way. Unfortunately for legend, the masonry of the tombs is of the last century of the Republic, but

their primitive form—resembling the tumulus-tombs of Etruria, such as we find at Cervetri—suggests that they may be restorations of older monuments. In any case, hereabouts was the ancient boundary between Rome and Alba, and the site of the legendary combat of the Horatii with the Alban champions, the Curiatii. On the other side of the road is the tomb-inscription of a certain Marcus Cecilius, which is peculiarly charming. "Stranger"—such are the words—"I thank thee for halting beside my resting-place. May thy affairs prosper, thy health flourish, and thy sleep be peaceful!"

Just beyond are the extensive remains of a magnificent villa once owned by the two brothers Quintilii, who were put to death by Commodus for the sake of their wealth. On one occasion, while Commodus was residing here, the villa was beset by an angry mob from Rome, enraged at the failure of the corn supply. They were only appeased by the surrender of the Emperor's minister, Cleander, who was thrust out of the palace to be torn in pieces by the crowd. It was at this point of the Via Appia that the sarcophagus was discovered in 1485, containing the body of a young girl which created such excitement when exhibited on the Capitol. Further along the road is the conspicuous monument called the Casale Rotondo—a huge round tomb, even larger than that of Cecilia Metella, which may have been built by the consul Messala Corvinus, the friend of Augustus. Its appearance is all the more striking by reason of the peasant's house, surrounded by olive-trees, which stands on the top of it.

Given sufficient time, and a hardy disregard for one's springs, there is no reason why one should not drive on, if not to Albano, at least to Le Frattocchie, the ancient Bovillae, where there are some remains of the amphitheatre.

It was in a wayside inn at Bovillae—probably on the site of the little *osteria* which stands there to-day—that Clodius vainly attempted to take refuge from the myrmidons of his enemy, Milo, who dragged him out and left his corpse lying beside the road. Not far away, too, are remains of what may well have been Clodius's villa. But the afternoon is drawing to its close—

aratra iugo referunt suspensa iuvenci,
Et sol crescentes decedens duplicat umbras.

It is wiser, perhaps, to take the road on the left of the Casale Rotondo, and, leaving the Capannelle racecourse behind us, to roll swiftly back along the Via Appia Nuova to Rome.

CHAPTER XIX

FROM THE AVENTINE TO OSTIA

ONLY a few years ago the Aventine, scarcely inhabited save by the few monks who still guarded its handful of historic churches, was one of the most attractive regions of Rome. Nowadays, the deserted solitudes where one could dream undisturbed, summoning the phantoms of Rome's history from the dark backward and abysm of time, are exchanged for a rank outcrop of aggressively modern flats and *villini*, and the hill is once more becoming, as in the days of the Republic, the habitation of the Roman plebs.

Under the Empire the Aventine acquired a distinctly aristocratic character, which indeed it retained during the early Middle Ages. Otto III, that strange offspring of East and West, the romantic idealist, born from the union of a German Emperor and a princess of Byzance, who dreamed of making Rome once again the real capital of the Empire, even built himself a magnificent palace near S. Alessio; while close by, two centuries later, frowned the sombre fortress of the Savelli. To-day, only the rose-red outer wall of the Savelli castle, where wild-flowers and weeds droop from the crevices of its broken towers, recall the days when it throbbed to the glittering life of the Papal court; when Nicholas IV, the first Franciscan Pope, was elected there after acrimonious dispute; and when Henry VII, newly crowned Emperor at the Lateran, held there the mockery of a coronation banquet, while the missiles of the defiant Guelfs thudded upon the very roof of the banquet-hall.

Save for a conspicuous section of the Servian wall, restored in the third century B.C., through whose arched emplacement once protruded, doubtless, some form of military catapult, traces of classical antiquity are few. Gone is the famous temple of Diana, dating from the age of the kings: its vicinity marked only by the little church of S. Prisca, which stands on the site of the house where Aquila and Priscilla are said to have given hospitality to St. Peter. Gone, too, is the equally celebrated shrine erected for Juno, the patron goddess of conquered Veii. Some remains of what is believed to have been the house of Trajan lie beneath the fine modern church of S. Anselmo, and the well-known restaurant, the "Castello dei Cesari," is built upon the ruins of what may have been the baths of Licinius Sura.

Apart, however, from these and similar scanty traces, the interest of the Aventine is centred wholly in its churches. The oldest and by far the most important is S. Sabina, which was founded about 452, apparently on the site of a private dwelling (remains of which still exist) where the faithful had been wont to assemble in earlier times. Restored in the ninth century, it was carefully liberated a few years ago by Professor A. Muñoz from the vandalistic defacements of the cinquecento. Composed in a key of austere simplicity, the great church well befits the followers of St. Dominic, to whom Honorius III presented it in the twelfth century. An orange-tree said to have been planted by the saint is still to be seen in the cloister.

The interior of the church, empty and silent, with its ancient windows of transparent talc, and its long lines of Corinthian columns—perhaps taken from the temple of Diana—recalls the magnificent basilicas of Ravenna. Of the fifth-century mosaic decoration there remains only the long inscription above the doors, with the two majestic

female figures symbolizing the Jewish and Gentile Churches, but the original decoration of the apse seems to be reproduced in the sixteenth-century frescoes by the brothers Zuccari. The choir and the episcopal throne have been carefully put together with the ancient fragments found during the restorations. At S. Sabina we find the earliest substitution of a series of arches for the classical architrave above the columns, such as still remains at S. Maria Maggiore: the marble decoration of the spandrels, in *opus sectile*, is the work of the Cosmati. In the centre of the pavement is the curious mosaic tomb-slab, attributed to Torriti, of Muñoz da Zamorra, General of the Dominican Order, and the first biographer of St. Dominic. More than one of the followers of Henry VII is also buried in the church.

The most precious ornament of S. Sabina, however, is the remarkable pair of doors, carved in cypress wood, and generally believed to be contemporary with the foundation of the basilica, though the vine-scroll border is assigned to the eleventh century. The panels, which constitute a concordance between the Old and New Testaments, are obviously no longer in their original positions, and some have entirely disappeared. Their general character strongly suggests the reliefs on early Christian sarcophagi. The scene of the Crucifixion, almost its earliest known representation, is very curious: there is no sign of a cross, and in fact Christ and the two thieves appear to be merely standing, nude save for a loin-cloth, and with outstretched hands, against the wall of some building.

Artistically, perhaps, the finest panel is that of the Translation of Elijah, where the angel guiding the chariot might have been copied directly from a Roman Victory. Interesting also is the scene where Christ stands in glory, surrounded by the symbols of the Four Evangelists, and clasping a scroll

inscribed with the Greek word "ICHTHUS." Below, SS. Peter and Paul hold a cross within a crown over the head of the Church, personified as a female figure who gazes raptly upwards at the divine vision.

The once rich and powerful monastery of St. Alexius—originally dedicated to St. Boniface—has suffered terribly from eighteenth-century modernization. Within the cloister is the tomb-inscription of Crescentius de Theodora, probably the father of the great leader who, more than twenty years later, defended S. Angelo in vain against Otto III. In 974 Crescentius de Theodora had headed a revolution against Benedict VI, who was thrown into S. Angelo and there strangled. According to the inscription, Crescentius ended his days as a monk in the monastery on the Aventine, dying peacefully in 984.

Beyond S. Alessio lies the garden, with its famous key-hole vista of St. Peter's, of the Knights of Malta, whose true and ancient title is that of the Knights Hospitallers of St. John of Jerusalem. The oldest and most important of the great militant orders, they were proclaimed by the Papacy completely free from all authority save that of Rome. The Knights of St. John still claim to rank diplomatically as an independent State, and are represented by a special Minister Plenipotentiary at the Papal Court. The church, rebuilt by Piranesi in 1765, contains several interesting monuments, while the panorama of the city and the Tiber from the beautiful garden is one of the most unforgettable in Rome.

At the foot of the Aventine is the "open space among the ruins, covered in winter with daisies and violets," where Adonais sleeps, with his devoted friend, Severn, beside him, divided by less than a hundred yards from the grave of his most musical of mourners. Overlooking the cemetery is the pyramidal tomb of Caius Cestius, a member of the

priestly order of the *epulones*, whose duty it was to supervise the sacrificial banquets offered to the gods. Here, beside Keats's grave, little seems changed since his and Shelley's lifetime, but it is not difficult to imagine the poets' feelings could they catch a glimpse of the dreary commercial suburb which, in place of the open Campagna that they knew, now extends from the picturesque old Porta S. Paolo to the famous church and monastery of St. Paul's Without the Walls.

Here, in a cemetery dating from Republican times, was laid the body of the Apostle. The little oratory erected above the grave was replaced by Constantine by a small basilica facing the Via Ostiensis, which in turn was greatly enlarged and beautified, as well as being made to face in the opposite direction, by Valentinian II, Theodosius, Honorius, and Honorius's mother, the Empress Galla Placidia, while a mile-long portico for the convenience of pilgrims connected it with the Porta Ostiensis. The basilica was restored by Leo I, only to be sacked by the Saracens in the ninth century, and was consequently surrounded by John VII with a fortified settlement called Johannipolis. By the tenth century such was the wealth and luxury of the monks that St. Odo of Cluny was appointed abbot to restore discipline, and was succeeded by the stern Hildebrand, afterwards Pope Gregory VII. Down to the Reformation the kings of England were honorary canons of St. Paul's, which they invested in perpetuity with the Order of the Garter. Unhappily the actual basilica is almost entirely modern, for in 1823 the venerable church, owing to the carelessness of a workman, was burned almost to the ground. The present church, completed under Pius IX, almost exactly reproduces the original plan and dimensions.

No church in Rome—not even St. Peter's—conveys so striking an impression of size and grandeur as does the

interior of S. Paolo, where the forest of giant columns is reflected in the polished marble pavement as though on the surface of some tranquil stream. The Gothic ciborium above the tomb of the Apostle is Arnolfo di Cambio's first important work in Rome [1]: four majestic angels support the vault on outspread pinions, while the charming figure of Eve, and the thought-lined features of the monk (St. Benedict?) facing the apse to the left, are executed with as much mastery as feeling.

Though not destroyed in the fire, the great triumphal arch suffered severely, and the mosaics upon it are perhaps no longer even a faithful copy of the fifth-century originals. Generally speaking, they have nothing in common with other mosaics of the period, and the style is so alien to classical traditions that it is even possible that they were entirely remade in the eighth century under Leo III. Not only is the introduction of the Twenty-four Elders found in no other fifth-century mosaic, but their execution is decidedly poor, while the bust of Christ has been invested with unique and repellent ugliness.[2] Along the top is the inscription, "Theodosius began, Honorius completed the hall sanctified by the body of Paul, teacher of the world," which in De Rossi's opinion has been transferred bodily from the apse during the restorations of the last century. Encircling the arch are the words. "The pious soul of Placidia rejoices in the splendour which the care of Pope Leo has added to her father's work."

[1] With the probable exception of his tomb for Cardinal Annibaldi at the Lateran.

[2] One is inevitably reminded of the tradition, fostered by the Greek Church, of the deformity of Christ, a tradition "of which Justin Martyr, Tertullian and Cyril of Alexandria were the principal advocates. The last declared that Christ had been 'the ugliest of the sons of men.'" (Lecky, *Rationalism in Europe*, I, iii.)

On the inner side of the arch are much-restored mosaics by Cavallini, which were once on the façade of the church. Those of the apse, which likewise survived the fire, were originally executed by Venetian artists for Honorius III—here seen prostrate at the feet of Christ, who bestows a blessing after the Greek manner. It was Honorius who sanctioned the Dominican Order in 1216, crowned Pierre de Courtenay in the following year at S. Lorenzo fuori, and in 1220, at St. Peter's, placed the crown of the Holy Roman Empire on the head of Frederic II von Hohenstaufen. Beyond the semi-dome are fifteenth-century mosaics of the Virgin and Child, and of St. John the Evangelist conferring a benediction on the anti-Pope, John XXIII, who was subsequently deposed by the Council of Constance. His tomb, by Donatello, is in the Baptistery at Florence.

The famous crucifix in the Capella del Crocefisso, which is said to have spoken to St. Brigit, and before which St. Ignatius Loyola and his followers took the vows of their new Order in 1541, is attributed to Cavallini, as also is the wooden figure of St. Paul, blackened by fire, in the same chapel. The modern Capella del Coro contains a good marble triptych of the fifteenth century. More interesting and important, however, is the ancient Easter candlestick, dating from about 1170, and sculptured with reliefs arranged in panels, in which the influence of Byzantine and Syrian art is curiously mingled with reminiscences both of early Christian sarcophagus-carvings and of Carolingian ivories. About eighteen feet high, it is not without a resemblance, despite the difference in scale, to the well-known column set up in Nero's honour at Mainz, which is itself, to quote Mrs. Strong, "a glorified form of the old Italic 'sky-pillar.'" It bears two inscriptions. The first reads, "I, Nicolà di Angelo, with Petrus Vassallectus, completed this work." The second runs: "A tree bears fruits—I, a tree, bear lights

—I carry offerings—but on the festal day—I announce joys—Christ is risen—for such are the gifts that I present."

Preserved in the sacristy are the remains of the ancient bronze doors, made by Staurachios of Constantinople in the eleventh century for Gregory VII, the great Pope of whom so few memorials remain in Rome. A remarkable example of Carolingian art is the so-called Bible of Charles the Bald, with miniatures vigorously executed by a certain Ingobert, who modestly declares that he not only rivals the painters of Italy in skill, but surpasses them in intelligence!

Grafidos ausonios aequans, superansque tenore
Mentis.

The cloisters, probably by Petrus Vassallectus, almost exactly resemble those of the Lateran, but are richer in colour and better preserved. Among the sculptured fantasies of the spandrels is an amusing scene of a wolf, disguised as a friar, and with an imposing tome before him, preaching to a kid. The statue of Boniface IX gives us an interesting portrait of the powerful Pope who trampled out almost the last sparks of Roman independence. A huge ancient sarcophagus, adorned with figures of Apollo and the Muses, once contained the remains of the converted Jew, Pierleoni, father of Anacletus II. Numerous inscriptions, of diverse origin, have been attached to the walls of the cloister, including an interesting reference to Nero's suicide, which was found close to the villa of his freedman, Phaon:

Hoc specus excepit post aurea tecta Neronem,
Nam vivum inferius se sepelire timet.

From S. Paolo an excellent motor-road runs direct to Ostia, the earliest seaport of Rome. The ancient city, about one-fifth of which has been excavated, is no less interesting than Pompeii, though wholly different in char-

acter. We need not dwell unduly on the legend of Aeneas's landing at Ostia, or of the city's foundation by Ancus Martius. It is now clear that this, the first colony of Rome, was founded towards the end of the fourth century B.C., and it was probably to commemorate Rome's first contact with the sea that the earliest Roman coinage, struck about this time, bears the impress of a ship's prow. At first a simple military and naval station, Ostia rapidly developed into a large and extremely wealthy city, a rich prize for the soldiers of Marius, who sacked the town in 87 B.C.

Under the Empire Ostia long exceeded even Puteoli in the extent and importance of her trade. Through her hands flowed not only the vast supplies of grain from Sicily and Africa that fed the teeming myriads of the capital, but the riches of half the world, from Britain to the farthest East. Her population of over a hundred thousand inhabited, for the most part, tall blocks of flats and tenement buildings closely resembling those not only of ancient but of modern Rome: her markets and warehouses hummed with activity: handsome porticoes sheltered the swarms of shoppers in her streets: and splendid public buildings—baths, temples, a sumptuous theatre—imparted dignity and beauty to the city. The domestic buildings of Ostia, unlike those of Pompeii, must have been modelled on those of the capital, and thus enable us to form a more or less vivid picture of everyday life in the Eternal City during her period of greatest splendour and prosperity.

The harbour of Ostia, constructed by Claudius with immense difficulty and expense to replace the former open roadstead, was greatly enlarged by Trajan, who extended the canal between port and river right to the sea: thus actually making a new outlet for the Tiber—the modern Fiumicino. Ultimately this proved fatal to Ostia, for early

in the fourth century the harbour of Trajan—which is still known as Porto—replaced her as the principal port of Rome. Little by little the older city sank into abandonment and decay, until, by the end of the century, when St. Augustine sat in an inn at Ostia by the death-bed of his mother, St. Monica, prior to embarking for Africa, little remained of her former greatness save a memory. "The last inhabitants," writes Professor Calza, "were obliged to accustom themselves to live as best they could amongst half-destroyed buildings, and streets choked with heaps of broken pottery, in a city where all civil authority was either absent or indifferent, and where men were allowed to pull down temples, mutilate statues, carry away building material, and even to bury the dead in the Baths or in the Theatre."

Though it remained a bishopric, the history of Ostia during the Middle Ages, almost wholly abandoned to the ravages of malaria and the raids of Saracen pirates, contains little of importance to record beyond a signal naval victory over the Saracens in the ninth century under Leo IV. Even the river has changed its course in the last four hundred years, and the imposing castle built in 1485 by Cardinal Giuliano della Rovere to guard the stream is now separated from it by a broad stretch of fields. It was in this castle that the Cardinal took refuge from Alexander VI in 1494, while in 1504 Cesare Borgia was kept here as a prisoner before being allowed to escape to Naples. It is now used as a museum for the housing of minor objects found in the excavations, the roof of the keep commanding a wonderful view of the ruins and the surrounding country.

Armed with a good plan of the ruins, one can spend an afternoon or morning very happily in exploring the old city, from the tombs beyond the gates to the great baths recently revealed beside the Forum. Practically everything is open,

the friendly and courteous *custodi* are delighted to answer questions, and on six days out of seven one can rely on being almost as undisturbed by other visitors as Selkirk on his island. On a cloudless day in spring, when the wild-flowers nod gaily in the faint breeze, and marble column and crumbling brick wall stand out against the deep-blue sky, few things are more enjoyable than to pass the day there, watching the little green lizards sunning themselves on the worn stones while one eats one's sandwiches, or evoking the long-silent life of the city, aided by the wonderful mosaics in which Ostia is so rich.

Once again the streets echo to the crack of whips and the rattle of wheels: a woman screams from a balcony to a child in the street below, from the wine-shop at the corner comes the twang of a guitar, the stave of a song, and the dull grinding of heavy stone mills is heard in the adjoining bakery. Down at the wharves the dust rises in clouds where slaves are toiling amid the shouts of the sailors and the creaking of ropes: in the baths a care-free throng splash or wrestle or converse at ease in the cool of the colonnade. A maniple of infantry tramps sturdily down the *decumanus*, the principal street: before the temple of the Capitoline Triad the sacrificial priest stands beside the altar, the bellowing of the garlanded victim drowning the shrill plaint of the double pipe: accompanied by wailing mourners a funeral procession wends its way unheeded towards the Porta Romana: and in the market-place just inside the gate two viragoes are shrieking insults at one another over a handful of garlic to the uproarious delight of the assembled bystanders.

Ostia is full of modern touches. Go into the barracks of the Vigiles, the police and fire-brigade of the city, where the bored sentries have scratched their names beside the gateway, and note the troughs in the courtyard where the

men watered their horses, the barracks "chapel" for the Imperial cult, and the little shrine and altar of Fortune where Cloacina might rather seem the appropriate divinity. Visit the noble warehouse of Messrs. Epagathus and Epaphroditus, and observe how remarkably it anticipates a palace of the Italian Renaissance, with its *cortile* and *loggie*. A small refreshment bar (*thermopolium*), still retaining its shelves and cupboards, the painted representations of its wares, and even one of the bronze hooks for the towels, might almost be paralleled in Rome to-day.

Not only the "Established Church" of the Greco-Roman pantheon but the invading cults of the Orient were well represented at Ostia. The temple of Vulcan—the most important in the city—has not yet been discovered, but the splendid temples of the Capitoline Triad and of Roma and Augustus face one another from opposite ends of the Forum, while the spectators in the theatre looked beyond the stage to the temple of Ceres, enclosed within a grand double portico as the Hadrianeum at Rome was enclosed within the Portico of the Argonauts. The worship of the Lares has left its traces in graceful shrine and delicately sculptured altar, and the memorials of other cults are hardly less numerous. Of Mithras alone no fewer than seven sanctuaries have so far been discovered, several of which are peculiarly interesting. The gods, indeed, were with the citizen of Ostia at every moment of his daily life, and watched over his incomings and his outgoings. Jupiter and Diana, Silvanus and Fortuna, gazed from street-corner or chamber-wall, presided over garden and market. Almost our last memory as we leave is of the majestic figure of Minerva the Victorious, which once looked down, probably, from the Porta Romana—a truly noble conception of divine power and divine wisdom.

CHAPTER XX

THE ENVIRONS OF ROME

THERE are wellnigh endless ways, as Kipling might have put it, of spending sunny days, and every single one of them is right—especially if it involves an excursion beyond the walls. In the long golden autumn, or when proud-pied April is decked in all his trim, the lure of the Campagna is, or ought to be, irresistible. Flowers appear on the earth, the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the motor-horn is heard in the land. Is there, one boldly asks, any sweeter note?

Even in the immediate vicinity of the city there are walks and drives in plenty. On a picturesque stretch of the old Via Latina, within easy distance of the Porta S. Giovanni, are two remarkably interesting tombs—the one belonging to a burial club, the Pancratii, the other, for no discoverable reason, called of the Valerii—exquisitely decorated with paintings and stucco, as well as the ruins of the basilica of S. Stefano, built by one of the Anicii at the end of the fourth century. Beyond the Ponte Molle, where Maxentius was drowned in the rout that followed his defeat by Constantine, one may visit the actual battlefield at Saxa Rubra: and, near by, at Prima Porta, the frescoed remains of Livia's favourite villa, *ad gallinas albas*.[1]

A lovely morning's walk is achieved by turning off from the Via Appia beyond the *Domine, Quo Vadis?* and following the little valley of the Marrana della Caffarella. In the

[1] Where was found the superb portrait-statue of Augustus now in the Braccio Nuovo of the Vatican.

second century the entire neighbourhood formed part of a large estate of the millionaire, Herodes Atticus, who may have inherited it from his wife, Annia Regilla. Her tomb, a graceful temple-shaped structure in brick and terra-cotta, still stands, in almost perfect preservation, close to a farm-house on the left of the path. Further on, one comes to a most picturesque nymphaeum built into the side of the hill, and often, but wrongly, called the grotto of Egeria. On the top of the hill is the church of S. Urbano alla Caffarella, which is simply a converted pagan temple, perhaps that of Ceres and Faustina. The portico has been walled up, but the interior is almost unchanged save for the Christian frescoes which were painted, possibly, in the eleventh century. Still earlier frescoes are painted in a niche in the tiny crypt.

Probably every visitor to Rome goes at least once to Tivoli—the "Tibur Argeo positum colono" beloved by Horace. It long preserved its independence of Rome, and on one occasion the Roman *tibicines*, or flute-players—the Professional Musicians' Union, so to speak—struck work as a protest against the economies of the censor, Appius Claudius, and took refuge at Tibur. How to get them back constituted a delicate diplomatic problem, until a leading citizen of Tibur craftily invited the recalcitrant musicians to a "spree" in the country. There, having got them gloriously drunk, he packed them all into a cart and shipped them back, blissfully unconscious, to Rome, where they awoke only as they were entering the city by the Porta Tiburtina. Their remarks on realizing the situation have not—perhaps fortunately—been recorded.

The usual attractions of Tivoli are, of course, the famous cascades, the two little temples of Vesta and the Sibyl, and the sixteenth-century villa built by Cardinal Ippolito d'Este. The son of Lucrezia Borgia and her last husband, the Duke

of Ferrara, Ippolito was educated at the French court, where in 1506 he hired assassins to put out the eyes of his half-brother because his mistress had admired them. His taste in art made him an especial favourite with Francis I, and the marriage of his niece to the Duc de Guise raised him to an almost royal position. On the Duke's fall, he had to fly from France, and finding small pleasure in the gloomy court of the bigoted Paul IV, he retired to Tivoli, and commissioned Pirro Ligorio to construct his magnificent villa. Unfortunately, the restorations recently effected by the Government, though admittedly necessary, have inevitably robbed the gardens of much of the strange enchantment which once brooded upon their twilit and neglected walks, and fountains mantled with velvety green moss.

The great deity of Tibur was Hercules, considerable remains of whose temple are still visible, especially near the Porta del Colle: while beside the Cathedral is a Roman hall, probably once opening on the Forum, and still containing the ancient standard measures. Close to the railway station, in the vicinity of the ancient Via Valeria, two interesting third-century monuments have recently come to light—one the tomb of the Vestal Cossinia, the other that of L. Annius Varus, a descendant of the celebrated soldier, Quintilius Varus, to whom Horace addressed one of his odes, and who fell fighting against the Germans in one of the greatest defeats the Roman armies ever sustained. Medieval remains at Tivoli are even more frequent—the castle, numerous old houses, beautiful Gothic windows, the remarkable frescoes at S. Giovanni and S. Silvestro, and above all the wonderful wooden group of the Deposition in the Cathedral, a masterpiece of thirteenth-century Roman art.

On the slopes below the town, cypress and olive guard

the exquisite ruins of the vast and rambling Villa of Hadrian. The various parts of the palace—now for the most part impossible to identify with any certainty—were built to recall the most interesting places seen by the Emperor during his continual travelling up and down the Empire: even, indeed, those he had—presumably!—not yet seen, since they included a representation of the lower regions! The hundreds of works of art that have been found, the exquisite mosaics and traces of stucco decoration that still remain on the spot, are a tribute to Hadrian's taste, as the sheer extent of the ruins speak of his passion for building, and of the enormous sums that must have been expended in gratifying it. It is a place to enjoy rather than to study, for a lovelier spot in which to dream away a sunny spring or autumn morning the world can hardly contain.

Beyond Tivoli extend the mountains of the Sabina, a region which beauty and romance seem almost to have made their own. Farfa, once the richest and most powerful abbey, save one, in Italy, whose amazing history, more than a thousand years old, is intimately bound up with that of medieval Rome: Licenza, where the waters of the Bandusian spring yet murmur in our ears as we tread the very pavements of Horace's rustic home: Subiaco, with its memories of Nero, and its wonderful monasteries founded by St. Benedict in the fifth century, where the very soul of the Middle Ages seems to linger still: these—and how much more!—lie hidden away amid the wild and lovely Sabine valleys.

From Subiaco one may drive on, by Genazzano—beloved by artists—to Palestrina, the ancient Preneste: once, it would seem, ruled by princes from Etruria, some of whose treasures are now in the Museo Preistorico at Rome. In Roman times it was famous for its immense temple of Fortune: the whole of the modern town is practically contained within

the site of the vast sanctuary. The ancient remains are numerous and deeply interesting, despite the fact that the town, then the property of the Colonna, has been twice destroyed—once by Boniface VIII in the thirteenth century, and once again by Cardinal Vitelleschi in the fifteenth.

The ancient Arx, connected with the town below by massive polygonal walls—perhaps of the sixth century B.C. —has been replaced by a medieval castle, where the young and ill-starred Conradin von Hohenstaufen, defeated at Tagliacozzo, was temporarily imprisoned. The panorama of mountain and sea and plain, with Rome, in clear weather, discernible in the remote distance, is indescribably grand. Towards sunset, when the hills are steeped in unearthly colour, and a mist, half golden, half kindling into rosy flame, veils the vast plain, the most fantastic of Turner's visions seem almost transcended by the reality before one's eyes.

Equally magnificent is the view from the mighty cliff on which uprear the scanty but impressive remains of Norba —built on the edge of the Volscian mountains that rise like a titanic rampart above the Pomptine marshes. The wall of precipice drops away sheer as a plummet line to where, a thousand feet below, the ruins of Ninfa, with

one tall, dark tower, rising sheer
Above the margin of the mere,

are like a half-forgotten dream of the Middle Ages. Far as the eye can reach, the marshes stretch away, bordered by the sparkling sea, to where the legend-haunted peak of Monte Circello rises like an island against the misty horizon. Nearer to Rome, Cori—the ancient Cora—is extraordinarily rich in Roman remains, especially of the time of Sulla, by whom it was largely rebuilt. Particularly well preserved is the pronaos of the temple of Hercules, as it is called, though it is more probably the temple of somebody else. To

provide homes for his discharged veterans, Sulla turned out the inhabitants of Cora, who had to make a new settlement lower down: and it is quite possible that the immemorial feud still existing between upper and lower Cori originated in Sulla's simple attempt to provide a land for heroes to live in.

Further afield, yet within easy motoring distance, are Anagni, Ferentino and Alatri—the last two with wonderful walls of polygonal masonry. The citadel of Alatri, which can also be reached by electric train from Rome, is rivalled in sheer impressiveness only by the Pyramids: the walls are from eighty to a hundred feet high, and the stones composing them are sometimes five feet across and up to seventeen feet in length. The church of S. Maria Maggiore, with its lovely rose-window, contains a most impressive group of the Madonna and Child, sculptured in wood. It belongs to the same school and period as that from Acuto in the museum of the Palazzo Venezia, referred to on page 192, but is more severely hieratic in character. The carved doors of the cupboard in which it was formerly kept are also preserved, and are quite as interesting as the group itself.

Anagni, the ancient Anagnia of the Hernicans, is now chiefly medieval, and is especially exciting as the place where Boniface VIII was surprised by Sciarra Colonna and a band of French troops under Guillaume de Nogaret. Amid the fury of the attack, and while the palace was already in flames, the aged Pope calmly arrayed himself in his full vestments, and took his seat upon the throne to await the inrush of the exultant enemy. For three days, till help came, he remained a prisoner, subjected to threats and insults, and, when finally released, returned to Rome only to die. Much of the palace still exists, while the grand cathedral is rich in relics of the last great Pope of the Middle Ages.

The *castelli Romani* are a series of little towns, nearly all of great antiquity, and easily accessible by tram from Rome. The name recalls the days when each was dominated by the castle of some powerful Roman family—Colonna or Savelli, Conti or Caetani. Marino, with its enchanted woods, was once a fortress of the Colonna: Grottaferrata, converted into a strong castle by Cardinal Giuliano della Rovere, was founded by St. Nilus in the eleventh century, and is the only remaining monastery in Italy where Basilian monks still perform the rites of the Greek Church in the Greek language: Rocca di Papa, the ancient Cabum, on the slopes of the Alban Mount—Monte Cavo—was long a stronghold of the Annibaldi, an echo of whose name survives in the so-called Campi di Annibale behind the village.

An excellent motor-road now leads to the very summit of Monte Cavo, crossing more than once the old Roman road, admirably paved, by which processions once climbed to the ancient shrine of Jupiter on the summit. Here, in Bagnani's words, was "the great federal sanctuary of the Latin people. Annual sacrifices were performed here, and the Feriae Latinae take us back to the very origins of the Latin race, long before Rome was founded or assumed the leadership of the [Latin] League." Here again the view is superb, comprising the two lakes of Nemi and Albano, the sea—a strip of burnished gold—and Rome itself beyond the rolling expanse of the Campagna.

Descending the mountain, a beautiful walk through the chestnut woods brings one to Nemi, with its old castle poised dizzily above the exquisite lake. Below are scanty remains of a celebrated shrine of Diana, whose priest—the "slayer Who must himself be slain"—was known as the King of the Wood (*rex nemorensis*). By a strange and savage custom, of extremely early origin, he invariably became priest by

killing his predecessor, eventually, of course, perishing at the hands of a new and stronger claimant, generally a runaway slave. Happily, the fairy-like beauty of the lake has not been seriously affected by the gigantic pumping-works undertaken by the Government in order to recover the famous barges or house-boats of Caligula, whose existence has been known since the fifteenth century, and indeed earlier.

A road, partly modern, partly ancient, leads down from Genzano to where the first of the barges is now lying on the mud—a gaunt grey mass of timbers, sheathed with lead over bituminated wool, and resembling the skeleton of some dragon of the prime. Of the finely wrought bronzes that once adorned her, some, the fruit of earlier attempts, are in the National Museum at Rome. Other and more recent spoils are preserved on the spot, including remains of the mosaic decoration of her decks and cabin walls, the heating apparatus and water supply, which help one to realize, not only the luxurious nature of the craft, but the Imperial festivities of which she was doubtless the scene.

From Genzano one may go on to Velletri, the old Volscian city of Velitrae, from which came Augustus's family, the Octavii. It contains the largest campanile and the best camouflaged cathedral in Latium, as well as the magnificent, though unfinished, Palazzo Ginetti, with its superb staircase. The road from Genzano to Rome passes through Ariccia, proverbial for the beauty of its women, and connected with Genzano on one side and Albano on the other by two imposing viaducts. Ariccia formerly belonged to a branch of the Savelli, which came to an abrupt end in 1534, when the heir to the estates was murdered by a jealous vassal who had given him an assignation in his wife's name.

Built, like Nemi and Genzano, on the lip of an ancient

crater, Albano and Castel Gandolfo look down almost vertically on the beautiful Alban lake, maintained at a uniform level by an ancient *emissarium* probably constructed about the end of the fifth century B.C. Castel Gandolfo, so called from its twelfth-century owners, the Gandolfi, has belonged to the Papacy since the sixteenth century, but the summer residence of the Pope is no longer the actual Papal palace, but the former Villa Barberini at the other end of the village, whose lovely gardens occupy a great part of a magnificent villa of Domitian. The great interest of the town, however, is the fact that it stands on the site of the venerable Alba Longa, which was said to have been founded by Ascanius, the son of Aeneas. It was originally the religious and political head of the allied cities of Latium, but was captured and destroyed by Rome in the sixth century B.C.

Albano, one of the most interesting of the *castelli*, owes its origin to a permanent camp established by Severus in proximity to Domitian's immense villa. The remains of this great fortified camp include a huge and imposing cistern, in perfect preservation, and still used for irrigation purposes in summer, when a whole month is required to fill it. The ruins of the amphitheatre are not particularly interesting, but the Baths, close to the railway station, present a most extraordinary appearance—rather like an engraving by Piranesi—owing to the houses that have grown up inside them.

Frascati, an attractive and busy town, is famous no less for its wine than for the magnificent summer villas of the Roman nobility, which are highly popular as show-places. In point of antiquity it is a mere mushroom, comparatively speaking, as it is hardly heard of before the end of the twelfth century, when the unfortunate inhabitants of Tusculum settled there after the destruction of their ancient city by

the Romans in 1191. The Counts of Tusculum, from whom the Colonna are descended, long exercised almost undisputed power in Rome, especially in the tenth and eleventh centuries, when they practically reduced the Papacy to a mere hereditary appanage. Save for the theatre, little is now left of one of the oldest cities in Latium, but the position, reached by a delightful walk from Frascati, is very beautiful.

Needless to say, in so brief an account, one can do no more than hint at the abundant interest and charm, not only of these, but of countless other places in the vicinity of Rome. Those above mentioned lie on the south, or Latin, side of the Tiber: beyond the north bank extended the mysterious land of Etruria, whose inhabitants exercised so profound an influence on the religion, the art and the history of the Eternal City. Only twelve miles from Rome was her great rival, the powerful and wealthy city of Veii, destroyed by the Romans in the sixth century B.C. after a siege which is to Roman legend what the siege of Troy was to the legendary lore of Greece. Scanty though the actual remains of Veii are to-day, the beauty of the site, together with its romantic associations, more than repays the enterprising pilgrim.

Still more interesting are the vast cemeteries at Tarquinia and Cervetri—real cities of the dead, especially at Cervetri, where the tombs show us the architecture and arrangement of those Etruscan dwellings of which literally not one stone remains. At Tarquinia so gay and vivid are the painted walls, that one can scarcely realize, not only their antiquity, but that the chamber which they enclose was not the actual habitation of the living, whose forms still seem to move before our eyes. The wine-cup circles about the banquet-table: the flute-players advance with an air of lively anima-

tion: the graceful figures of the dancing-girls whirl and sway to ditties of no tone—and only these painted shadows, imprisoned for ever in the silence and darkness of the tomb, remain to tell us of the strength and splendour, the beauty and joyousness, that lived and exulted and passed away more than twenty centuries ago.

Finis succrevit, manus et mea fessa quievit.

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